

MYSTERIES AND CONSPIRACIES

For Christophe Boltanski

MYSTERIES AND CONSPIRACIES

DETECTIVE STORIES, SPY NOVELS AND THE MAKING OF MODERN SOCIETIES

LUC BOLTANSKI

Translated by Catherine Porter

First published in French as Énigmes et complots © Éditions GALLIMARD, Paris, 2012

This work, published as part of a program providing publication assistance, received financial support from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the United States and FACE (French American Cultural Exchange).

This English edition @ Polity Press, 2014

Polity Press 65 Bridge Street Cambridge CB2 1UR, UK

Polity Press 350 Main Street Malden, MA 02148, USA

All rights reserved. Except for the quotation of short passages for the purpose of criticism and review, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

ISBN-13: 978-0-7456-6404-0 ISBN-13: 978-0-7456-6405-7(pb)

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Typeset in 10.5 on 12 pt Sabon by Servis Filmsetting Ltd, Stockport, Cheshire Printed and bound in Great Britain by T.J. International Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall

The publisher has used its best endeavours to ensure that the URLs for external websites referred to in this book are correct and active at the time of going to press. However, the publisher has no responsibility for the websites and can make no guarantee that a site will remain live or that the content is or will remain appropriate.

Every effort has been made to trace all copyright holders, but if any have been inadvertently overlooked the publisher will be pleased to include any necessary credits in any subsequent reprint or edition.

For further information on Polity, visit our website: www.politybooks.com

Polity would like to thank Penguin Group (UK), in addition to the following entities for permission to use the extract on page vi:

"The Theme of the Traitor and the Hero", from COLLECTED FICTIONS by Jorge Luis Borges, translated by Andrew Hurley, copyright © 1998 by Maria Kodama; translation copyright © 1998 by Penguin Putnam Inc. Used by permission of Viking Penguin, a division of Penguin Group (USA) LLC.

From Collected Fictions by Jorge Luis Borges. Copyright © Maria Kodama, 1998. Translation and notes copyright © Penguin Putnam Inc., 1998. Reprinted by permission of Penguin Canada Books Inc.

Extract from 'Theme of the Traitor and Hero' from COLLECTED FICTIONS by Jorge Luis Borges. Copyright © 1995, Maria Kodama, used by permission of The Wylie Agency (UK) Limited.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements Foreword		vii
		X
Preface		xiv
1	REALITY versus Reality	1
2	The Inquiries of a London Detective	40
3	The Inquiries of a Paris Policeman	73
4	Identifying Secret Agents	121
5	The Endless Inquiries of 'Paranoids'	170
6	Regulating Sociological Inquiry	224
Epilogue: And History Copied Literature		268
Notes		274
References		304

The idea that history might have copied history is mind-boggling enough; that history should copy *literature* is inconceivable.

Jorge Luis Borges, 'The Theme of the Traitor and Hero'

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Written between 2008 and 2011, Mysteries and Conspiracies benefited from discussions with many colleagues – so many that I shall not attempt to list them all here – about the themes I had set forth in On Critique. But the current book is above all the fruit of friendly and even familial exchanges. Friends better informed than I about the sociological questions raised by literature, journalism, law, films and television generously offered skills that I lacked, and I hope they will not feel betrayed by my admittedly often awkward attempts to put what I learned from them into practice. Gabriel Bergounioux, Sabine Chavon-Dermersay, Philippe Roussin, Arnaud Esquerre and Marcela Iacub were of special help during the preparation of this book, and they offered well-informed and perspicacious readings of a preliminary version.

I also took excessive advantage of the little 'think tank' that I am lucky enough to have at hand almost without leaving home. My brother Jean-Élie Boltanski, a linguist and specialist in British literature, transmitted his passion for Anglo-Saxon detective stories and spy novels, as well as for the films they inspired. My daughter Ariane, a historian who specializes in sixteenth-century France and Italy, taught me a great deal about the origins of the problematics of conspiracy. My son Christophe, a war correspondent for a major news magazine, helped me understand the similarities and differences between sociological and journalistic writing. I exchanged ideas daily with my wife Élisabeth Claverie, whose current research focuses on the anthropology of genocide and the establishment of international tribunals designed to judge suspected participants; her work bears especially on questions about the meaning of 'organized crime' or 'common criminal enterprise', questions that directly concern

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

problematic relations between individual and collective entities, and thus the problematics of conspiracies. I express my deepest gratitude to these family members here.

The text also owes a great deal to the attentive rereadings undertaken by Mauro Basaure, Emmanuel Didier, Damien de Blic, Corentin Durand, Jeanne Lazarus, and, more generally, to the highly stimulating intellectual atmosphere in the laboratory – the Groupe de sociologie politique et morale of the École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS) and the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS) – in which I have been working for more than twenty years. Éric Vigne, without whom this text would never have achieved the status of a book, was also, as always, an attentive and vigilant reader. He has earned my warmest thanks for the stubborn determination with which he persists in defending the social sciences against all odds. Finally, I thank the Gallimard copy editors who put their precious knowledge of spelling, syntax and typography at the service of the text and helped turn the typescript into a book.

In addition, I would like to thank the organizers and participants in the seminars in which I presented my work; their questions and critiques were very useful. Several occasions stand out: the October 2010 conference organized by Élie Kongs on new directions in critique; the ioint EHESS-Université Paris-VIII seminar on processes of attribution that I gave in 2010-11, with Damien de Blic, maître de conferences at Paris-VIII, and Cyril Lemieux, director of studies at EHESS; the EHESS seminar organized by Marcela Iacub on the relation between law and literature, where my work was presented in January 2011; the seminar organized in April 2011 by Mauro Basaure in the context of the Instituto de Humanidades at Diego Portales University (Santiago, Chile), which gave me the opportunity to discuss the ideas developed in this work with Chilean colleagues from several disciplines (literature, philosophy, sociology) over three especially intense hours; the lecture I gave in June 2011 at Humboldt University in Berlin, at the initiative of Professors Jean Greisch and Rolf Schieder. Intermediate versions of chapter 2 appeared in the collective work Sozialphilosophie und Kritik published by Rainer Forst, Martin Hartmann, Rahel Jaeggi and Martin Saar in honour of Professor Axel Honneth (Suhrkamp 2010), and in the journal *Tracés*, published by the École normale supérieure lettres et sciences humaines in Lyon, under the direction of Arnaud Fossier, Éric Monnet and Lucie Tanguy (spring 2011). Many thanks, too, to Professor David Stark, who invited me to spend some time at Columbia University in April 2010, enabling me to complete the documentation for this book.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In conclusion, I have to say that my decision to embark on this project was spurred to a large extent by the so-called Tarnac affair, in which Julien Coupat, a militant French leftist whom I had known when he was enrolled as an EHESS student in my seminar and who later became a friend, was one of the principal individuals unjustly accused of having tried to cut the power supply to a train; he was arrested, charged under anti-terrorism laws, and imprisoned for six months. I began writing a month or so after the beginning of this affair in November 2008, and the process of constructing the book helped me manage my emotions and my indignation by shifting them onto a zone of reflection. I very much hope that the court's rulings, which have not yet been issued as I write, will exonerate the 'Tarnac Nine', although this will obviously not eliminate the prejudice produced by the relentless police efforts directed at Julien Coupat and his companions.

With this volume, Polity completes its admirable task of making the principal works of the sociologist Luc Boltanski available in English. This makes accessible to British and American readers one of the major bodies of post-Bourdieusian European social theory. Undertaken in France between the 1980s and the present, oriented to solving problems left by the previous generation of theorists associated with post-structuralism and *pensée* '68 – that age of 'heroic' theory, from an apparently revolutionary opening within the frozen post-war consensus – Boltanski's project transpired amidst a historical chastening of hopes for élite theoretical understanding and radical political transformation. Yet Boltanski did not make the turn to liberal (or neo-liberal), anti-totalitarian (or deradicalized), or banal Americanizing themes, as did those of his countrymen who created that self-abnegating *pensée anti-68* which has made fin-de-siècle French thought often look so barren when viewed from abroad.

In many ways, Boltanski has been a man out of place. Despite individual books, translated earlier, which have had enormous impact in particular sub-fields of Anglo-American scholarship (specifically *Distant Suffering* [1993], essential to theorists of humanitarianism, and *The New Spirit of Capitalism* [1999, written with Eve Chiapello], a fundamental analysis of the postmodern workplace), the coherence of his project had not been visible in anglophone countries until now. His reception abroad was blocked, on one side, by hostility to his early-career separation from Pierre Bourdieu, making him seem more alien than necessary to the 'reflexive sociology' so ardently received in the English-speaking countries. On the other, it suffered from too much of a sensation of familiarity, as Boltanski's commitments showed close affinities with Anglo-American intentions to rediscover

the agency, resistance, and vernacular self-understanding of ordinary social actors.

Boltanski commenced his career as a student, assistant, and close associate of Bourdieu. He collaborated on the founding of *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* with 'the boss' (as Boltanski calls him in a recent memoir and reflection, *Rendre la Réalité Inacceptable* [Rendering Reality Unacceptable]) and co-wrote notable work on the 'production of the dominant ideology' in French media and society. As Boltanski formed his own distinct research programme in the late 1970s and early 1980s, however, he drew up strong objections to the god's-eye view that belonged to the sociologist in his mentor's system. Their difference, and ultimate theoretical competition, is remembered as acrimonious up to the time of Bourdieu's death in 2002.

In more recent summaries of his sociological life's work including On Critique (2009), Boltanski has stressed that his research into the pragmatics of moral contestation and everyday critique 'was fashioned both in opposition to [Bourdieu's critical sociology] and with a view to pursuing its basic intention' (x). Bourdieusian critical sociology had tried to fuse the quest for emancipation in Marx with the valueneutrality of Weber. It would unmask ideology and domination – the ways that privileged groups get to say what reality is like – but remain scientific, committing itself to no concrete interest or normative particularity. It might inspire readers to indignation, but always remained cov about its personal involvements. And the scientist would stand in for the revolutionary, but stood apart from political constituencies, somberly alone in knowing how things 'really are'. So Boltanski's moral and political sociology tried to plunge back into the perspectives of narrow interests and communities of limited view – but seeing multiple sides and approaches at once. He produces a 'sociology of critique', anatomizing the philosophical bases and rationales for different actors' multifarious challenges to institutions. Instead of the super-sophistication of the god's-eve observer, he traces the dynamics of unsophisticated 'affairs' and scandals (like the Dreyfus Affair) for practical social change. In place of the unconsciously incorporated dispositions of habitus, he explores the 'unofficial' ratiocination and unacknowledged moral philosophy that goes on where official discourse prefers to close its eyes (as in his ethnography of French women's experience of legal abortion, The Foetal Condition [2004]). During Bourdieu's lifetime, this tack could seem hostile to the predecessor's sociological edifice. From the standpoint of today, Boltanski's moral-philosophical and actor-centered perspective has come to seem the earlier system's vital complement and completion.

Mysteries and Conspiracies is not a departure for Boltanski, though the transposition to literary accounts of social order may seem unexpected. The underlying architectonics of how 'reality' is constituted, challenged, and stabilized through social forms belongs to On Critique. The last chapter in this book ('Regulating Sociological Inquiry') openly continues the meditations of that earlier apologia. The discovery of profound sociological significance in fictional media, too, goes back to some of Boltanski's earliest research on comic strips and is perhaps not altogether methodologically unlike his later uses of the literature of management theory. It also alludes silently to Boltanski's other life as a poet, librettist, and occasional writer on art. The incredible pleasure and good humor of Boltanski's unfolding of the detective novel and the spy novel, genres wholly familiar to us revealed in entirely unfamiliar ways, is as much a wonder of artistic and readerly ingenuity, however, as it is a surprisingly convincing scientific strategy to capture a difficult social reality.

This book turns to popular fictions as a new means of cracking open the State and the law. This maneuver is not new. Literary scholars will certainly make it. But because Boltanski is a sociologist first, the outcome is uniquely felicitous. He knows what to look for – where the bodies may be buried, so to speak. State and law are simultaneously social fact and fantasy: anxiety-producing impositions of iron upon our soft reality, and highly personalized, fleshly protagonists of reassuring stories. Thus where literary scholars often seem undeservedly surprised and impressed at distilling any social order from fiction, Boltanski uses novels to attack very particular problems in our theorization of the place of 'the official' in the daily, unofficial experience of instituted power. He explores 'social causality'. He pries open such topics as the intimacy between police and social science; the idea of 'inquiry' as such and its delineation of the formations it looks into; the concealment of one order of reality and causation by another. (Hence his neutral interest in disreputable 'conspiracy theories', and the basis of distinctions between social causation we – the 'educated' – ratify, and those which we disdain.)

One will not find here the discussions of language and form that define literary criticism; the quarry is altogether different. Through detectives and secret agents, Boltanski discovers shoring-up processes, in social fantasy, of forms of order necessary to the state which the state may not, juridically, contain (like the moral law, the agreements of gentlemen, the ethos of a civil service – or the 'deep state' and global-financial-racial conspiracy). In *Mysteries and Conspiracies*, Boltanski thus confirms his admission to the fraternity

of great literary sociologists and sociologists of literature – whether we speak of the distinct orientations of a Raymond Williams, Lucien Goldmann, Franco Moretti, or Pierre Bourdieu. Through this most recent of Boltanski's books, originally published in French in 2012, the English-language audience has the opportunity to have 'caught up' on his work at last, in two senses. We can await the new books to come.

Mark Greif Assistant Professor of Literary Studies at The New School, New York, and a founding editor of *n*+1.

PREFACE

This book takes as its subject the thematics of mystery, conspiracy, and inquiry. It seeks to understand the prominent place these thematics have occupied in the representation of reality since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It focuses, first, on works belonging to two literary genres intended for a broad public in which these thematics have been featured: crime novels and spy novels, grasped in the forms they took from their beginnings in the late nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century (chapters 2, 3, and 4). Then, by developing the thematics of inquiry (which is at the heart of crime fiction) and the thematics of conspiracy (the main subject of espionage fiction), the work veers towards questions that concern not only the representation of reality in popular literature but also the new ways of problematizing reality that have accompanied the development of the human sciences. These sciences have made inquiry their principal instrument. But they have also sought to establish a procedural framework allowing them to distinguish inquiries that can claim 'scientific' validity from the many forms of inquiry that have developed in the societies they study. These forms include police investigations and/or their fictional stagings, and even inquiries undertaken occasionally by social actors in order to unveil the causes, which they deem real but hidden, of the ills that affect them.

For this project devoted to the human and social sciences, I have drawn essential material from three fields in particular. First, psychiatry: at the dawn of the twentieth century, psychiatry invented a new nosological entity, paranoia, one of whose chief symptoms is the tendency to undertake interminable inquiries and prolong them to the point of delirium. Second, political science: this discipline has taken up the problematics of paranoia and displaced it from the

psychic to the social level, looking on the one hand at conspiracies and on the other at the tendency to explain historical events in terms of 'conspiracy theories' (chapter 5). Third, sociology: this discipline pays special attention to the problems it encounters when it seeks to equip itself with specific forms of 'social' causality and to identify the individual or collective entities to which it can attribute the events that punctuate the lives of persons and groups or even the course of history.

The articulation among these seemingly disparate objects is established by positing the analytic framework presented in chapter 1, which serves as a general introduction. This framework seeks to pin down the social and political conjuncture in which, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the thematics of mystery and conspiracy became tropes destined to play a prominent role both in fiction and in the interpretation of historical events and the workings of society. The thesis proposed here links questions about the representation of reality with changes that affected the way reality itself was instituted during the period in question. The relation between reality and the state is at the heart of the analysis. Mysteries can be constituted as specific objects only by being detached from the background of a stabilized and predictable reality whose fragility is revealed by crimes. Now, it is to the nation-state as it developed in the late nineteenth century that we owe the project of organizing and unifying reality, or, as sociology puts it today, of constructing reality, for a given population on a given territory. But this demiurgic project had to face a number of obstacles, most critically the development of capitalism, which ignored national borders.

As for the thematics of conspiracy, it is the focal point for suspicions about the exercise of power. Where does power *really* lie, and who *really* holds it? State authorities, who are supposed to take charge of it, or other agencies, acting in the shadows: bankers, anarchists, secret societies, the ruling class . . .? Here is the scaffolding for political ontologies that count on a distributed reality. A surface reality, apparent but probably illusory even though it has an official status, is countered by a deep, hidden, threatening reality, which is unofficial but much more real. The contingencies of the conflict between these two realities – REALITY vs. *reality* – constitute the guiding thread of this book. We shall follow the conflict, as it unfolds, from several different angles. For the appearance and very rapid development of crime novels and then spy novels, the identification of paranoia by psychiatry and the development of the social sciences, sociology in particular, were more or less simultaneous processes that also

coincided with a new way of problematizing reality and of working through the contradictions that inhabit it.

Rather than offer an impossible conclusion to a history that is presumably far from over, the book's epilogue returns to the terrain of literature by looking at Franz Kafka's *The Trial*. That text concentrates – with an intensity whose brilliance has been endlessly praised by the novel's many commentators – the principal threads that I am seeking to disentangle at least to a limited extent here. *The Trial* takes up the thematics of mystery, conspiracy and inquiry that are at the heart of crime novels and spy stories. But by inverting their orientation and perverting their mechanisms, Kafka's text discloses the disturbing reality that these apparently anodyne and diverting narratives conceal.

It is certainly possible to challenge an approach that consists in grasping the question of reality by relying at the outset on a documentary corpus made up of works intentionally presented as fictions. All the more so since, in the narratives at issue, it is conventional to leave a maximum of free play to the imagination for the explicit purpose of entertaining the reader – that is, precisely in order to remove the reader from the pressures and constraints of daily life and thus of reality. Nevertheless, crime novels and spy stories have arguably been the chief means for exposing to a broad public certain concerns that, precisely because they go to the heart of political arrangements and call into question the very contours of modernity, could not easily have been approached head on, outside of limited circles. According to this logic, it is precisely because uncertainties about what may be called *the reality of reality* are so crucial that they find themselves deflected towards the realm of the imaginary.

It is generally acknowledged today that crime novels and spy novels count among the principal innovations of the twentieth century in the domain of fiction. These genres made a sudden appearance in English and French literature at the end of the nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth, and they spread very broadly with remarkable speed. Initially associated with so-called popular literature, these narrative forms, organized around the thematics of mystery, conspiracy and inquiry, were rapidly extended to more ambitious literature, which took over their predominant themes. But the appearance and very rapid development of these genres are more than interesting phenomena within the history of western literature. Detective stories and tales of espionage, which have been proliferating continually since the early twentieth century, first in written form¹ and then through films and television, are the most widespread narrative forms

today on a planetary scale. Thus they play an unprecedented role in the representation of reality that is offered henceforth to all human beings, even illiterates, provided that they have access to modern media. In a sense, these narratives constitute objects of predilection for a sociological approach that is turning away from a strictly documentary function and seeking new ways to grasp certain symbolic forms, especially political thematics, that have developed during the twentieth century,² somewhat the way history and philosophy have been able to make use of the Homeric poems to analyse the symbolic structures of ancient Greece, or the way classical tragedy used those same texts to explore representations of power in seventeenth-century France.

On the conceptual level, this project has given me an opportunity to deal with questions that I had carefully avoided earlier, questions that I not only was unable to answer but that I did not even know how to formulate. The first of these is the question of the state, which is probably the hardest for sociology to address, precisely owing to the foundational ties that link the apparatus of state power with this apparatus of knowledge. I should also mention the question of social causality, one that has been largely abandoned by contemporary sociology; the question of which entities are pertinent for sociological analysis; the question of relations of scale (micro- and macrosociology); and the question, finally, of the place that should be attributed to events in the descriptions proposed by our discipline. Let me reassure the reader: none of these major issues will find a satisfactory solution here. But it has nevertheless been a relief to me to dare to look at them straight on.

This book also gave me an opportunity to use concepts that were better broken in because I had worked with them in earlier studies, for example the concepts of uncertainty, trial, affair, critique and especially reality, constructed reality understood as a network of causalities based on pre-established formats that make action predictable. In On Critique (2011 [2009]), I sought to show that the idea of the 'construction of reality', which belongs today to the organum of normal sociology, is meaningful only provided that one analyses the way reality comes to attach itself to the surface of what I call, in that same work, the world (a distinction that is taken up again with more precision in the first chapter of the current book). Everything that happens emanates from the world, but in a sporadic and ontologically uncontrollable fashion, while reality, which is based on a selection and an organization of certain possibilities offered by the world at a given moment in time, can constitute an arrangement apt

to be grasped synthetically by sociologists, historians and also local actors. One goal of my present endeavour is thus also, in a way, to flesh out the conceptual system proposed in *On Critique*.

I must add, nevertheless, that in writing this book I have hoped that readers who are not sociologists but practitioners of other disciplines (or even of no discipline at all) could read the text with interest. I have undertaken this project with a concern for grasping symbolic forms that, situated as they are on the borderline between social and political reality in its most tangible aspects and in particularly fantastical fictional representations, are not easily grasped either by using the methods of classic sociology or by resorting to the means available to literary studies. This approach implied taking as given the links that have always brought sociology into proximity with the vast realm of the 'humanities'. In this way I have hoped to contribute to the analysis of the political metaphysics that, without necessarily being inscribed in the canonical forms of political philosophy, have nevertheless marked the previous century and that to all appearances still haunt the century that is now our own.

The London meanderings of Aristide Valentin

'The Blue Cross' is the first story in *The Innocence of Father Brown*, which is in turn the first of five collections of detective stories published by G. K. Chesterton between 1911 and 1935 (Chesterton 1994). Father Brown, the detective hero of these tales, is a Catholic priest, small in stature and quite ordinary in appearance. He faces a superb criminal: Flambeau. French by birth but worldwide in scope, a brilliant artist of crime, Flambeau is wanted by the police in at least three major European countries. At least, this is the case in the early stories; later, Father Brown manages to 'turn' Flambeau and make him an invaluable collaborator. Together they solve mysteries that arise like shooting stars from the ether in the earth's atmosphere, repeatedly penetrate our world and disrupt its seemingly stable and orderly arrangement of reality.

When 'The Blue Cross' begins, a French detective, Aristide Valentin, has gone to England to track down Flambeau, about whom he knows nothing except that he too has crossed the Channel. Valentin is French to the core, thus devoted to reason. But as he has a good understanding of how reason works, he is not unaware of its limits, and he knows that there are circumstances when reason requires us to pay the closest attention precisely to what seems to elude it. On this occasion, Valentin has no trail to follow. All possible paths of investigation are open to him; he has no reason to prefer one to another. Not only does Valentin not know where Flambeau is, he does not even know what has drawn his quarry to London: a criminal enterprise, inevitably, one for which Flambeau has devised a plan, but there is no reason to suppose that the deed has already been done.

Valentin thus opts for an approach that consists in paying attention to minuscule events that seem senseless and thereby take on the character of *mysteries*.

In the opening sequence of 'The Blue Cross', Valentin meanders about the streets of London, not seeking clues (as Sherlock Holmes does), since he does not even know the nature of the criminal deeds towards which certain particular arrangements might point; if he knew, he could establish a referential relation between these arrangements and the deeds themselves. He simply pays close attention to every event that has the character of a mystery, in the sense I have just given this term. A first mystery: he goes into a restaurant for breakfast - it is a tranquil, simple place with old-fashioned charm - and orders coffee and a poached egg. As he is about to put sugar in his coffee, he is astonished to find that the sugar bowl does not contain granulated sugar, as he expected, but salt. When he proceeds to examine the salt shaker. he observes that it is full of sugar. He summons the waiter, who acknowledges the oddity and attributes it to two priests, one tall and one short, both calm and respectable, who had had soup at that very table a short time before. Why this attribution? Because, the waiter explains, while one of the two priests behaved normally (he paid the bill and left), the other lingered a moment and (second mystery) grabbed his cup of soup and tossed its contents against the wall.

Valentin, continuing his random pursuit, comes across a display of fruit in a grocery-shop window: oranges and nuts. Now (third mystery), on the pile of nuts there is a sign indicating 'premium tangerines, twopence', and on the pile of oranges, 'top selection of Brazil nuts'. Under questioning, the enraged merchant answers that two priests had come by and that one of them had (fourth mystery) deliberately overturned the basket of oranges. Valentin then speaks to a policeman standing across the street and asks him if by any chance he has come across two priests. The policeman answers that they had climbed aboard a yellow bus and that one of them appeared drunk (which constitutes a fifth mystery, priests not being the sort of individuals one generally expects to see strolling inebriated about the streets in the morning). Valentin in turn takes a yellow bus and sits on the top deck. After a while, the bus passes a pub with a broken front window, looking as if it had been deliberately smashed (sixth mystery). The owner, when questioned, tells him that this misdeed was committed by two men in black. When it was time to pay the bill, one of the two had given him a sum three times higher than the price of the meals consumed. 'It's for what I'm about to break',

the man said, whereupon he used his umbrella to break the glass. Finally (seventh and last mystery), a woman encountered in a charming sweetshop tells Valentin about a package that a priest gave her, asking her to send it to a certain address. By tracking this package, Valentin puts himself on the trail of the still unknown criminal and crime that justify his own presence in London.

How to understand 'mysteries'

Aristide Valentin's ramblings through the streets of London, where he lets himself be guided by a series of *mysteries*, give us a first indication of how this term is to be understood. A mystery arises from an event, however unimportant it may seem, that stands out in some way against a background - to borrow terms from the psychology of form - or against the traces of a past event, not witnessed by the narrator, that remain perceptible later on. This background is thus constituted by ordinary understandings as we know them through the intermediary of authorities (educational in particular) and/or through experience; the latter gives actions a relatively predictable character, especially by associating them with habits. A mystery is thus a singularity (since every event is a singularity) but one whose character can be called *abnormal*, one that breaks with the way things present themselves under conditions that we take to be normal, so that our minds do not manage to fit the uncanny event into ordinary reality. The mystery thus leaves a kind of scratch on the seamless fabric of reality. In this sense – to return to concepts introduced in On Critique - a mystery can be said to be the result of an irruption of the world in the heart of *reality* (Boltanski 2011 [2009]: 57–9).¹

By the world, I mean 'everything that happens' – to borrow Wittgenstein's formulation – and even everything that might possibly happen – an 'everything' that cannot be fully known and mastered. Conversely, reality is stabilized by pre-established formats that are sustained by institutions, formats that often have a legal or paralegal character, at least in western societies. These formats constitute a semantics that expresses the whatness of what is; they establish qualifications, define entities and trials (in the sense in which the term 'trial' is used in On Justification [Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 (1991)]), and determine the relations that must be maintained between entities and trials or tests if these are to have an acceptable character. In this way, reality is presented as a network of causal relations that holds together the events with which experience is confronted. Reference

to these relations makes it possible to *give meaning* to the *events* that are produced by identifying the *entities* to which these events must be *attributed*.²

These causal relations are thus tacitly recognized in general as unproblematic, so that it does not seem necessary to verify them, to establish proofs for them – or at least it does not seem necessary to push the investigation beyond the boundaries that have been set up by habit and also by the trust placed in the validity of the established formats. Especially when the causality in question has a social dimension, this trust is based on agencies that guarantee the regular attribution of events to pre-defined entities – among which, in the modern era, legal and governmental agencies play a preponderant role. We shall see later on that law can be considered as one of the principal social arrangements used to establish and maintain these attributions.

Unlike events that can be qualified as ordinary, an event possesses an enigmatic or mysterious character when it escapes the normal attributions of a specific entity (there is no valid reason for a waiter to put sugar in a salt shaker) or when the nature of the entity to which it can be attributed is unknown. Thus a mysterious event may well have an immediate *signification* (a certain building has collapsed), in the sense that the change of state affecting the situation in which it intervenes can be described in a way that relies on generally accepted physical data (if the building had risen into the sky, it would have been called a 'miracle'). But one can say that the event does not have a meaning as long as it has not been possible to attribute it to a given entity or, when that entity is already known, to determine that entity's intentions. The event, as a singularity, thus takes on full meaning only by being related to an entity credited with an identity, a certain stability across time, and an intentionality - whether this latter is manifested, or not, by way of a conscious act.³ A given building has collapsed. This is a 'fact'. But to give the event a meaning, we have to be in a position to identify the entity to which it can be attributed as well as the reasons behind it. Must the cause of the collapse be imputed to an earthquake? A design flaw? A construction defect on the part of the builder (who used inferior materials to save money, for example)? To an illegal manoeuvre on the part of the owner so he could get the insurance money? To a criminal who sought to cover up the murder he had just committed? To a bomb set off by a terrorist (and, in that case, what were his real intentions, and is it truly appropriate to call him a terrorist)? We shall come back to these notions in more detail later on.

Detective stories vs. fantastic tales and picaresque novels

Detective stories, as a genre, set forth mysteries and their solutions. Stories of this form begin with an event and work back towards its causes.⁴ The formation of this literary genre thus entails a certain number of presuppositions about reality. Indeed, it has been observed that an enigma can only stand out against the background of a stabilized reality. Detective stories are based, more precisely, on two presuppositions that distinguish this genre from its predecessors: tales, especially fantastic tales, on the one hand, and, on the other, novels that can be called 'picaresque', in a succinct designation of a narrative orientation that originated in Spain and developed in quite diverse forms in French and English literature.⁵

Detective stories are distinct from tales, whether miraculous or fantastic, to the extent that they bank on the existence of a reality known as 'natural', that is, on the type of causal linkages that the 'natural' sciences establish. The association between the narrative logic of detective stories and scientific logic was central to the earliest analyses of this genre (Messac 1975 [1929]). Detective stories could not exist without a clearly established dividing line between natural reality and the world known as supernatural. If gods or spirits can modify reality according to their whims, and if we cannot know their intentions, then reality does not possess the necessary stability for mysteries to stand out in a salient way against the background formed by the normal course of events. In detective stories and also, of course, in spy stories, there are no references to supernatural beings, such as ghosts, and this absence marks the difference between the two literary genres we are considering, on the one hand, and so-called fantastic tales, on the other. To be sure, in the literature of the second half of the nineteenth century there are many narratives associated with the fantastic genre that do not refer directly to the intervention of supernatural beings, or to anything magical, but that seek to arouse anxiety and unease in the reader by depicting ordinary situations in terms apt to bring out their strangeness (Todorov 1973). But this device, particularly evident in Guy de Maupassant's fantastic realism, aims to look on all reality as tinged with an anxiety-producing uncanniness, often by presenting it as it might appear to a subject afflicted with mental illness. Now, this literary approach, too, excludes the possibility of establishing a detective-story intrigue. For if reality as a whole takes on an enigmatic form and is tilted towards the impossible and the incomprehensible, then the singularities on which mystery-based novels rely (singularities that the investigator's job is to explain) are

swallowed up in a framework that no longer allows the ordinary to be distinguished from the extraordinary, the interpretable from the inconceivable.

The work of Edgar Allen Poe, who was both a master of the fantastic genre and the inventor of the detective story.⁶ allows us to distinguish clearly between these two genres. Paranormal phenomena are not excluded from Poe's fantastic tales. But such phenomena never come into play in those that prefigure the detective story. Similarly, while Arthur Conan Dovle was a devoted practitioner of spiritiualism in his private life and even wrote a history of the practice (Doyle 1926), he excluded supernatural and paranormal elements from the detective stories featuring Sherlock Holmes. These narratives do not incorporate any events apt to transgress the causal modalities that we customarily ascribe, in western societies, to 'natural laws'. And while certain characters may initially evoke such phenomena - ghostly appearances, doors that open or close without human or mechanical intervention, and so on – the inquiry always ends up giving them a natural explanation, or attributing them to manoeuvres designed to deceive the story's protagonists (and by the same token its readers).

This restriction clearly does not apply to Doyle's many fantastic tales. Let us compare, for example, two stories that both include the mysterious appearance of a monster. In The Hound of the Baskervilles, a detective story, readers are first allowed to believe that the huge beast terrifying the villagers is of paranormal origin. But this irrational belief is disproved by Sherlock Holmes's investigation. The irrational has a rational outcome. In 'The Terror of Blue John Gap', a fantastic tale, rational arguments are invoked at the beginning of the story, but they are belied by subsequent events. The inhabitants of a remote mountain village in England also believe in the existence of a terrifying monster. The narrator, 'a man of a sober and scientific turn of mind, absolutely devoid of imagination', is scornful at first of these 'old wives' tales' and tries to find a rational explanation for the strange phenomena reported by the locals (the inexplicable disappearance of sheep on moonless nights), before finding himself in the presence of a monster from the bowels of the earth whose victim he becomes in turn (Doyle 1977: 69).

A second presupposition concerns the social world. If the mysteries on which detective stories hinge are to stand out sharply against the background of reality, reality has to be consistent not only with natural 'laws' but also with social regularities. This is what distinguishes detective stories from picaresque narratives. Both genres belong to the vast domain of adventure stories. A detective story includes characters

who have 'adventures'; it strings together incidents, reversals, dramatic turns of events, and so on. But, unlike picaresque tales, detective stories bank on a reality whose lineaments and linkages offer a basis for predictable anticipations, and the enigma stands out against the background of this stabilized social reality.

In a picaresque novel, 'adventures are juxtaposed without benefit of causal relations', in 'a world that has nothing to offer but chance,' and where 'fragmentation and contingency' rule (Pavel 2003: 101, 106). Let us take, for example (to remain within the confines of French literature), Alain René Lesage's Gil Blas de Santillane (1886 [1715–1735]), inspired by early seventeenth-century Spanish literature, or Voltaire's Candide (2005 [1759]), which can be seen as a late, parodic expression of picaresque narrative. In these texts, as in the classic works of the genre, stress is placed on the more or less chaotic nature of the various milieus in which the characters and, with them, all human beings are immersed, no matter when or where they live out their earthly lives. According to the conceptions presented in such works, human beings are above all playthings of circumstances, welcome or unwelcome. These circumstances are always local, in terms of space and time. Each moment in every place is thus characterized by a certain combination of circumstances on which the protagonist's situation depends in the 'here and now'. But once a given situation is resolved, especially an unwelcome situation from which the character seeks to escape, he or she is thrust into another situation, equally singular (and often no more welcome). Life's unfolding is thus comparable to a series of 'throws' - as in throws of dice – that is not governed by any principle of general causality but depends rather on whim or chance (the latter term is used here in its trivial sense to designate absolute unpredictability, and not in the probabilist sense it has been given by mathematicians after Pascal). The picaresque novel not only sets aside the picture of an ordered reality, it even excludes any reference to a hidden principle of order - whether this might involve divine providence, historical determination, or objective laws governing society – that would make it possible to give meaning to events that no individual person has planned or even desired. A rational construction of moral life, like the one Adam Smith, inspired by Newton, developed in his Theory of Moral Sentiments (2002 [1759]), is at the opposite extreme from the picaresque novel, in which it is impossible to distinguish the 'good guys' from the 'bad guys' (and it was precisely to mock efforts to establish a simultaneously providential and rational moral order that Voltaire wrote Candide). The picaresque tale, starting with

the novella first published anonymously in Burgos that came to be regarded as the prototype of the genre (*Life of Lazarillo de Tormes* 2000 [1554]), makes malice, lies and trickery the very principles of human behaviour and the driving forces behind stories that proceed in erratic ways. But this sort of dark realism excludes the possibility of a stabilized reality, since the motives for action are entirely unpredictable. What is more, the representation of reality is laid out on a single plane, the one that links the fleeting intrigues fomented by trickery; this structure not only excludes the reference to parallel levels of reality that is needed to set up a detective story, it also rules out any staging of the *ambivalence* – inasmuch as ambivalence is distinguished, precisely, from lies – that will constitute one of the major themes of the modern novel.

The stories that Robert Louis Stevenson collected in New Arabian Nights (1882) and in a sequel, More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter (1885), constitute an even more telling example for our purposes, in that they are contemporaneous with the invention of the detective story. They include most of the ingredients that will be found in the narratives marking the birth of the detective genre, and later the first spy stories, even though Stevenson's tales can be clearly distinguished from the latter. In Stevenson's short stories, mysteries arise one after another, but they dissolve in chaos, paradox or comedy. As the collection titles show, the author's intention was to renew the genre of the Arabian tale, transposing it to contemporary London, which had been treated since the mid-nineteenth century as a city full of mystery. 8 In these narratives we find the kinds of threatening situations (booby traps, duels, and the like), entities (clandestine clubs with perverse aims, such as the Suicide Club and secret societies), and characters (criminals, swindlers, bomb-throwing anarchists) that will become familiar in detective fiction, and even more so in spy fiction. But, in keeping with the logic of tales, in Stevenson's stories anything at all can happen, and the hero's adventures are completely unpredictable. Prince Florimel, Sovereign of Bohemia, wanders in various disguises through the London underworld accompanied by his faithful sidekick Colonel Geraldien. He meets madmen, desperadoes, male and female adventurers, virtuous damsels in distress, fanatics and wise men; relying only on his courage and his sense of honour, he serves as the instrument of an immanent justice that is beholden neither to the police nor to the legal system. There are indeed mysteries, but their outcome is always paradoxical. Thus, for example, in 'The Dynamiter' the chief anarchist, Zero, never manages to set off a single bomb; he is the very embodiment of impotence. Although

all the ingredients are borrowed from contemporary reality, nothing ties together the various situations that arise one after another in these more or less bizarre stories whose implausibility is presumably designed at least in part to bring out the contingent nature of the existing social order. A nonchalant dandy himself, Stevenson was a critical observer of the society of his day.¹⁰

Neither the fantastic tale nor the picaresque tale is well suited for the construction of mysteries. The fantastic tale presents the world in its strangeness; the picaresque presents the world in its incoherence. The staging of both states of affairs, strangeness and incoherence, relies on ontological presuppositions that exclude any departure from the worlds thus put in place. An enigma exists as such only through reference to the possibility of a solution, that is, of its negation as an enigma. It is presented as an *anomaly*: as something that intervenes to disrupt a coherent set of predictable expectations. However, this disruption is not only temporary but, in a certain sense, illusory. Once the solution has been found, everything falls back into place.

The constitution of reality: the real vs. reality

Having taken on the task of specifying the conditions for the emergence of the detective story, I shall posit a first hypothesis. The appearance of this novelistic genre has as a condition of possibility the establishment of something that can be presented as *reality*.

To clarify what I mean by this term, I shall introduce a distinction between two ways of naming the context of action: on the one hand, the real, on the other, reality. The characters that navigate within a fantastic tale are certainly in contact with real entities and states of affairs. If a given fantasmatic apparition were not real, the story would lose all interest (hence the reader's disappointment when the narrator sees fit to give, in conclusion, a 'rational' interpretation of the strange events recounted during the narrative). Similarly, the hero of a picaresque novel grapples with entirely real circumstances (otherwise he would run no risk and the narrative would hold no interest). But the real entities and states of affairs with which the action has to reckon have a circumstantial and singular character. They remain, as it were, attached to the particular events through which they manifest themselves and to the situations that these events bring about. There are thus as many real things as there are events, and the series of situations gives rise to a series of different, and often incompatible or contradictory, real things.

To refer to something as *reality* presupposes, conversely, that one can count on a set of regularities that are maintained no matter what situation is envisaged and that frame each event, however singular it may be. These regularities make it possible to trace the boundary between the possible and the impossible, and they offer a general framework for action that allows for a certain predictability or, as it were, a certain order. In picaresque or fantastic narratives there are isolated zones of order, to be sure; these are generally attributed to the political will of the powerful, or to more or less well-marked trajectories and points of encounter (today, we would speak of networks). But they are always fragile, and they rarely stand up against the combination of circumstances that shatters them. Conversely, detective stories count on reality in itself, that is, on something apt to serve as a substratum for the various situations confronted by the action, independent of the 'subjective' interpretations developed by the actors. The elements that constitute this reality have an all-encompassing character (even if the extension and limits of the reality in question can be problematic). These elements are presumed to exist in a stable relation with one another and to constitute a relatively coherent whole that makes a descriptive overview possible (even if it is understood that such a picture, always incomplete, may be subject to modification and even transformation). It is only against this background of reality, taken for granted, that a mystery can stand out, shine and attract attention.

Depending on the historical context and on what we now call society, reality thus defined can be grounded in very diverse forms that are linked, for example, to religion, kinship or law. In the original detective story, this background of reality rests on two clearly separated although interacting orders whose constitution as such is relatively recent. It is first and foremost a matter of *physical reality*, and the first analyses to which this genre gave rise, those of Régis Messac (1975 [1929]) and Siegfried Kracauer (1981 [1922–5]),¹¹ quite appropriately stressed the relation between the appearance of detective stories and the development of science and technology. But it is also, and one might even say especially, a matter of *social reality*.

By this term, I refer to a project of describing the human environment as an organized whole, possessing a specific logic and obeying laws that are peculiar to it, independently of the motives and wills of each individual taken singly. This whole is composed simultaneously of individuals and of very diverse entities. Certain entities are defined by law (for example, members of the bar), while others are not (for example, social classes). These entities may be locally rooted (for example, the inhabitants of a particular small town) or they may be

dispersed in space (for example, the nobility). Finally, the entities are generally endowed with properties, with a type of intentionality and a way of being or a specific character that are reflected, by and large, in the way of being and the character of individual persons in so far as the latter can, through certain of their properties, be associated with these entities. Thus there is a way of being characteristic of the bourgeoisie, and someone who has prior knowledge of this way of being will anticipate certain behaviours upon coming into proximity with a member of that class.

Other older, more widely attested ways of constructing reality, in particular by relying on law and on kinship, are not abandoned with the development of these new forms. But the combination of the properties that derive from specifications of the legal order – which can be called statutory or official – and the properties that are identified when one takes into account non-legal, unofficial and properly social entities, as it were, is problematic, a source of uncertainty. Thus certain individuals may 'in fact' have a way of being that does not fit with their official identity and that is discovered – often with astonishment – before it becomes clear that their bizarre nature has to do with bonds that attach them to specific entities that are not legally defined (it is not known at first, for example, that a given physician is Jewish, or of lower-class origin, but once this information is available, everything becomes clear . . .).

The idea that such an 'objective' description, capable of shifting from physical reality towards social reality (and also, as Lorraine Daston has shown [1992], from social reality, governed by laws established by legislators, towards physical reality, which is also presumed to obey 'laws'), is not only possible but necessary to the harmonious workings of political entities began to emerge, as we know, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It accompanied the development of statistics, political economics, and then – shortly before the appearance of the detective story – sociology. It was also in this intellectual context, and by relying on these new ways of envisaging the human environment, that the social novel took shape, a genre that flourished to an extraordinary degree in the nineteenth century and of which the detective story is, in part, a belated transformation.

Social novels, detective novels, spy novels

From the outset, detective novels and spy novels have been presented as sociological genres, like the broader genre of which they are

offshoots, the social novel. It is hard to see how these two sub-genres could have come into existence before the establishment of a category that became 'self-evident' in a commonsensical way only in the midnineteenth century: namely, society.12 Thus it can be said that the genre of exotic or historical detective stories, very widespread today, is anatopical and anachronistic, in the sense that it projects into nonwestern spaces or remote historical periods a way of envisaging the human environment that is historically and geographically situated. In the case of detective fiction, as with the social novel more generally, the characters featured in a narrative, necessarily limited in number, are depicted in terms of groups – age, sex, nationality, and so on – and especially of social classes, whose groupings and relationships make up society as a whole. Each character is thus treated both as a singular individual – with his or her unique personality, psychology, past, destiny, and so forth – and as a typical representative of a larger whole, a grouping with more or less defined contours that figures in society and constitutes one of its components. The reading contract is based on the hypothesis that all readers will be capable of shifting back and forth between the characters presented in the narrative with their own biographical particularities and the social types of which these characters are exemplars (tokens), and even that readers will be able to relate characters to real persons whom they could well have met in the course of daily life and whom they could have identified by operating similar back-and-forth movements between the real person, the character in the novel and the social type.

The type of determinism that subtends social novels makes room, as sociology does, for transgression and crime; these too can be explained by taking the social properties of the characters into account. Relying on statistics, sociology showed in the nineteenth century that transgressions and crimes themselves obeyed regular social patterns which made them as predictable as ordinary behaviours, if not more so¹³; indeed, this was one of the major accomplishments that allowed sociology to show its mettle. Moreover, the convergence between the social novel and sociology was such that it would not be absurd to suppose that the public success of certain sociological works during the second half of the twentieth century (Pierre Bourdieu's Distinction in particular [1984] (1979)]) derived from a transfer of the reading contract from the social novel to works that appeared at first glance to be intended for specialists in the social sciences. As in the case of the social novel, these texts aroused the interest of readers who recognized themselves and others in the pictures they were offered, where they saw

something like small-scale or stripped-down models of the society in which they themselves were immersed.

In social novels, a crime, as an event, is an attribute of the criminal who is its cause. Event and cause are inseparable. The question raised by the crime and the criminal is then essentially a moral question: if we know the social conditions that turned a man into a criminal, do we have the right to hold him morally responsible for his crime, or must we attribute a portion of the responsibility to the entity called society? Now, the innovation introduced by the crime novel in relation to the social novel concerns precisely the relation between the crime and the criminal. An event occurs. It is a crime. But we do not know to whom to attribute it. Any of the characters represented, including the narrator (as in Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*), might be its author; the detective is the sole exception.¹⁴

Detective fiction and spy fiction deploy characters that are even more stereotyped and establish an even more ordinary reality than social fiction does. But this banalization of reality serves as a support structure for the crisis, which takes a criminal event whose attribution is problematic and reveals the uncertain and fragile character of that event. Spy fiction goes a step further, since beneath every character, no matter how ordinary, another person may be concealed, one who has totally different properties, inclinations and intentions, and whose social appearance is all the more stereotypical in that it is only a disguise intended to deceive both the other characters and the reader. By the same token, not only the real identities but also the real relationships that the actors maintain become uncertain and problematic, since surface relations of a certain type in fact dissimulate bonds, intentions and plans that are kept secret.

Reality in crisis: the conspiracy and mystery forms

This deliberate, functional layering of identities characterizes the structure of what we may call the *conspiracy form*. A conspiracy is an object that is only perceived as such – as distinguished from ordinary human relations – from the outside. It is distinguished from ordinary relations only by the operation of *unveiling* that sets an apparent but fictitious reality and a hidden but real reality side by side, on the same level. This is why the moment when the conspiracy is unmasked has the properties of a *coup de théâtre*, a dramatic turn of events.

Thus reality, social reality as initially perceived by a naive observer (and reader), with its order, its hierarchies and its principles of

causality, reverses itself and unveils its fictional nature, revealing another much more real reality that it had been concealing. This second reality is inhabited by things, acts, actors, levels, connections and especially powers whose existence, indeed, whose very possibility, had not been suspected by anyone. The question of the powers, and thus of the causal determinations that forge reality, animate it and give it its customary shape, is of prime importance here. 15 In detective novels, the unveiling carried out by the detective reveals that even, or especially, those who were supposed to embody reality and who possess the powers required to make it hold together and warrant respect are, or may be, criminals. In spy novels, suspicion falls in the first place on the people in power. The operation of unveiling brings into broad daylight an awareness that these apparently legitimate political power-holders are 'in fact' - in reality - only marionettes manipulated, with or without their knowledge and consent, by other forces that possess much more extensive, but hidden, powers.

In detective fiction and spy fiction alike, the unveiling comes after an inquiry. The question that the inquiry form raises is above all, as we shall see, a question about the limits of inquiry. The plane of reality in the sense specified above – surface reality – has the major advantage of reducing uncertainty about the whatness of what is, and thus limiting the extension of the investigations we need to undertake so as to give direction to our actions in the course of daily life. 16 As we have seen, a plane of reality consists in a network of pre-defined and more or less specialized entities, rules, test formats, conventions, and so on, that orient action by limiting the field of possible interpretations. By aligning oneself with reality, one can form reasonable expectations and impute to other entities, and especially to persons, intentions corresponding to the 'role' - to use the vocabulary of classical sociology - that they play in the situation in which they are encountered. (Thus I impute to the taxi driver the intention of taking me to the address I have indicated and not that of taking me off to some remote spot where he will hand me over to criminals.) It is more economical to bank on reality than to suspect it or question it. An inquiry not only interrupts the course of action, it also presupposes taking costly measures because it requires going into spaces that have not previously been demarcated and recognized (in what we have called *the world*) in search of elements that must be taken into account to orient the action. Investigative undertakings can be found in everyday situations, but they are generally not taken very far. Those who pursue them are not trying to accumulate irrefutable proofs but only to arrive at probable presumptions that suffice to orient action.

Unlike these ordinary routines, detective fiction stages situations in which inquiry is extended to its extreme limits. Anything – a footprint, a crumpled blade of grass, a five-minute time difference in witness reports – can be used as a clue or as proof. Before the appearance of the detective novel, such extraordinary, unremitting, meticulous tests of reality had never given rise to literary descriptions. As has often been noted, these tests can be seen as literary reflections of the methods deployed in scientific work that were popularized in the late nineteenth century especially through schools and the press. But this explanation does not account for the fascination that investigative procedures seemed to exercise, almost instantaneously, at the time the detective novel was born.

Let me point briefly to one other index of this new attention to investigations (we shall come back to the topic in chapter 5). Detective fiction developed concurrently with an important innovation in the realm of psychiatry: the invention and description, by the German psychiatrist Emil Kraepelin (1970 [1899]), of a new mental illness labelled paranoia. According to Kraepelin, one of the symptoms presented by the victims of this illness was precisely the extension of an inquiry beyond what was reasonable in the ordinary circumstances of life, as if the shape and tenor of reality always presented a problematic character in the patient's eyes. The investigator in a detective story thus acts like a person with paranoia, the difference being that he is healthy.

Without developing the analysis further at this stage, I should like to suggest that insistence on inquiry and investigation is one of the external forms manifested by a more general and more profound anxiety regarding reality itself. On the one hand, reality has probably never been presented in such a robust, organized and thus predictable fashion as in modern western societies. But, on the other hand, and perhaps for the same reasons, its fragility, or what is suspected to be such, comes to the fore and seems to arouse unprecedented anxiety. I think that this anxiety is what detective fiction dramatizes and that we have to seek the main reason for the success of the genre in the art with which it translates this anxiety about *the reality of reality*.

Reality and the nation-state

Anxiety about reality is even more apparent in spy fiction, whose development, beginning some twenty or thirty years after the emergence of detective fiction, has manifestly been oriented towards the

question of the nature of the nation-state. This question, or rather the question of the relation between the state and reality, was already a key component of detective fiction. One of the distinctive features of the earlier genre is that it situates the action at particular moments, bringing individuals who are part of civil society into contact with representatives of the nation-state, under circumstances that allow the latter to scrutinize in detail the private lives of ordinary persons who have been put in the position of *suspects*. When representatives of public power delve into personal lives and family secrets, they open up private matters to public scrutiny via the press; the menacing presence of investigative journalists is regularly evoked in classic detective stories. Detective fiction is thus distinguished by the way it blurs the line between private and public affairs, between civil society and the state, and, more radically still, between two manifestations of reality. Thus, on one side, we have reality as it is actually experienced by individual actors in the diversity of everyday situations; on the other, we have reality as a whole, resting on a framework of formats, rules, procedures, knowledge and tests that purport to be generally applicable, a reality sustained by institutions that determine its shape. In Europe, these institutions took on a systemic character in the late nineteenth century because they were more powerfully integrated under the authority of the state, and also because they were beginning to be unified by a common reference to technology and the sciences, among which the social sciences, especially economics and statistics, occupied a prominent place.

By relying on the sciences, on education and on population studies, the state project that was taking shape claimed at least implicitly that it was eliminating the gap between lived reality and instituted reality, between *subjectivities* and the objective arrangements that served as their framework. Indeed, the elimination of that gap is inherent in the very idea of the nation-state.¹⁷ In this political utopia, the hyphen concentrates the full meaning of the project: to attach, in an inseparable synthesis, on the one hand the reality experienced by individual persons, whose multiplicity is neutralized by their belonging to a single nation whose customs and whose so-called national character are represented as belonging to the natural order, that is, as being-initself, and on the other hand the state as an agency of self-awareness, control and governance that operates through institutions to ensure the organization, stability, security and consciousness of that natural order, that is, its transformation into being-for-other. Some recent studies, especially some of Michel Foucault's, 18 have stressed the difference between this new conception of the state as nation-state and

the conception of the sovereign state developed in Europe as the wars of religion were winding down.¹⁹ The state – which could then be characterized as a social-state, following Gérard Noiriel²⁰ – was no longer conceived merely as a higher-order power that was relatively free from religious questions and subject to its own morality (the Reason of state), in such a way as to ensure its own security. In addition, the state claimed to know, control and, to a certain extent, shape the reality within which the populations placed under its authority led their lives, and it even proposed to ensure the education of these populations and to organize the conditions of their well-being, in so far as possible.

Taking social reality - conceptualized according to the model of physical reality – into account gave substance to a utopian synthesis between state and nation. The state became an agency that ordered and guaranteed reality inasmuch as that reality was at once lived and instituted, in other words, simultaneously treated as already in existence and as requiring a supplementary effort to bring it into being. This essentially demiurgic form of the state project – to which the Foucaldian term 'biopolitics' can be applied, and which culminated in the welfare state²¹ – would have been completely implausible had it not been able to count on the sciences and their close relationship to the state. The convergence between state projects and scientific projects is what allowed reality to be established and stabilized as a composite consisting on the one hand of physical laws, technologies, economic and social laws, and on the other hand of laws adopted by parliaments, decrees issued by ministries, measures taken by the police, and, more generally, legal instruments and social technologies of representation and governance. In this assemblage, statistics played an essential role. Defined at the outset, as its name implies, as a science called upon to describe the state, the field of statistics was able to serve as a go-between that linked social reality to physical reality owing to its grounding in mathematics (Desrosières 1993). As for sociology, it is not hard to see that the entity it took as its object, society, was a composite assemblage of populations, objects and rules - official rules, such as laws, and unofficial ones, such as norms - contained within the borders of a nation-state. And it has been possible to show that, without necessarily being nationalist in inspiration, the strands of sociology that developed in the late nineteenth century incorporated into their problematics and often universalized the specific problems posed, in the various European countries where this discipline appeared, by the construction or expansion of the nation-state form (Wagner 1994).

What is at stake in detective novels and spy novels

Taking into account the relationship that developed in Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries between the construction of the nation-state and the specification and stabilization of reality makes it possible to pinpoint what is at stake first in detective novels and then in spy novels. The anxiety that is dramatized in these literary genres and thus stirred up in readers, producing the particular sort of excitement called *suspense*, originates in the possibility of calling into question the reality of reality. G. K. Chesterton, who had the mindset of a metaphysician or a theologian, may be considered the first to have intuited this properly metaphysical dimension of detective fiction.²² In this respect, he played an innovative role in the movement that consisted in taking the detective story form, the paradigm of so-called 'popular' literature, and shifting it towards a more ambitious literary form by grasping and exploiting the philosophical and moral resources this new genre had to offer. Not only because. centred on the scene of the crime, it dramatized the question of values – the opposition between good and evil – or because, spurred by the excitement of the search for causes, it borrowed its methods and procedures from science, or because, engaging with the problem of responsibility, it joined the emerging discipline of psychoanalysis in reopening the question of the boundary between the conscious and the unconscious, the voluntary and the involuntary, but also and above all because it gave new form to timeless questions regarding unity and multiplicity, order and disorder – in sum, precisely the old ontological question of reality itself.

However, one of the interesting features of detective and spy novels is that they incorporate this metaphysical dimension in a specifically political conjecture that masks it. The genres we are considering set up situations in which the state's claim to have reality under control seems for a moment to prove unfounded. In my reading, the observation that reality is escaping the state's efforts to know it and stabilize it is what arouses the anxiety and excitement on which these genres feed. And this is so even if the state finally succeeds – as it does at least in the classic forms of crime and espionage fiction – in getting the upper hand and reaffirming its power over reality, which is nothing less than the power to determine reality and give it meaning.

In detective novels, the state, as the agency responsible for reality, is thus subjected to something like a trial or *test*,²³ of which the empirical test set forth in the narrative (we shall come back to this later), the one that pits a criminal and an investigator against each other,

is only one concrete manifestation. This trial, considered in terms of its political metaphysics, is not instituted by a murder – which is not an obligatory component of a detective story – or even by a crime. The fact that the state's vocation is to establish an order that stands against disorder and transgression, or rather to establish an order that has the power to determine what it excludes in terms of transgressive disorder, belongs to the very definition of this political form. The history of the state form is thus, inseparably, the history of the principles of order that the state invokes as its own and that of the transgressions the state sets out to punish. We might also note that, in the realm of popular literature, stories of criminal exploits and descriptions of the penalties to which their authors were condemned did not wait for the emergence of detective fiction to reach a broad audience. This is attested, for example, by the extraordinary diffusion of the Bibliothèque bleue under the Old Regime in France, in which, alongside almanacs, astrological predictions and tales and advice of all sorts, a good deal of space was allotted to *faits divers*: anomalous incidents from everyday life, often of the 'man-bites-dog' variety.²⁴

The trial that faces the state in detective fiction is precisely the mystery as an anomaly in relation to reality. Reality, which the state is supposed to underwrite, is not called into question by the fact that there are criminals, a fact that in a way constitutes the very justification for a political order, but by uncertainty surrounding the circumstances of the crime, and especially its attribution, since any character at all, however irreproachable he or she appears, may be its author. Thus detective fiction dramatizes a reality open to suspicion in all respects, material as well as human, physical as well as social. Now, the very possibility that such generalized, virtually absolute, suspicion can be deployed, with a certain plausibility, moreover, grounded in a realistic description of reality, in itself constitutes a trial for the nation-state, that is, a test of the state's claim not only to make order reign but also and especially to make intelligible and to some extent predictable the events that enter into the field of the possible. It is important to stress here that it is not a matter of challenging the legitimacy of the state or of public power. The earliest detective stories, and to an even greater extent the earliest spy stories, are devoid of any critical aims (social and political criticism did not begin to show up in these literary genres until the 1930s). Conservative or even reactionary in their inspiration, the classic crime and espionage novels present narratives in which the state, the legitimate state, always gets the upper hand in the end. These stories do not aspire to challenge but rather to harness the anxieties, the tensions and even

the contradictions that inhabit the relation between the political order and reality, and between lived reality and the formats or frameworks that provide reality with its footing when it is considered from a general standpoint. Anxieties and tensions are probably inherent in any political order, and even in any experience of reality. Here we can follow Claude Lévi-Strauss when he shows how myths put contradictions to work without offering any solutions, not even dialectical ones, as if to give those who are grappling with a contradiction some objects with which they can come to terms, or 'make do', so they will get used to the contradiction or resign themselves to it.²⁵

But these anxieties and tensions took on a specific form when, in the context of the increasing power of the European nation-states and the development of the natural and social sciences, the possibility of establishing coherence among different dimensions of reality - physical, geographic, economic, social, historical, legal - and integrating them into a global political form began to be envisaged. The anxieties that did not fail to arise every time reality manifested itself in its fragility, its inconsistencies and its contradictions, converged on the nation-state, the embodiment of this political form.²⁶ So it is not surprising that, under the unprecedented historical circumstances, relatively new symbolic forms emerged that could address and consequently neutralize these tensions and anxieties, by combining several narrative forms with different orientations. Anxiety could be pushed for a moment to a peak - since nothing could be taken for granted any longer and reality as a whole had been thrown into crisis - but was then assuaged owing to a restoration of order whose hyper-rational and quasi-magical character nevertheless left open the suspicion that a different outcome was possible, one that would see reality slip definitively into chaos.

Let us now look at some of the tensions and anxieties that are echoed in detective and spy novels and try to relate them to the various political orders that were established towards the end of the nineteenth century.

A first anxiety has to do with the uses of speech, and thus involves the question of truth. In modern nation-states, which are highly composite and often very large political entities, the actors are less and less able to interpret the context of an action and attribute meaning to what happens to them with reference to local communities composed of persons with whom they interact and to whom they are linked by pre-established hierarchical relations. It suffices to think of the way in which vast numbers of workers and peasants found themselves projected several hundred kilometers away from home, in the trenches

of the First World War, following decisions in which neither they themselves nor any of the persons in their immediate environment played a role. The totality was manifested with unprecedented intensity, and at the same time it could not be grasped directly by each of the individuals that it was presumed to include, although it affected their concrete existence.

Political situations of this type confer a preponderant weight on the words of persons who hold authority and express themselves from a distance: at issue, then, are first and foremost the words of political leaders, but also the words of those who relay the leaders' discourse, such as government officials or journalists. Still, since human beings are eminently critical, because they have been misled and lied to, this authorized speech rarely succeeds in imposing itself forcefully enough to silence other versions of what is happening, versions transmitted by chains of testimony or rumour. The search for truth thus has to take into account a constant tension between the *official* and the *unofficial*. This tension is obviously at the heart of the political intrigues about which the principal players continually dissimulate or lie and make official declarations that contradict testimony gathered from unofficial sources.

Such tension is incorporated more explicitly still into spy novels in which lies issued by the state are dramatized and in which the official discourse of representatives of authority is particularly subject to scepticism. The very texture of the state is eroded by the presence of traitors, 'moles', who are secretly associated in conspiracies. Espionage fiction can be said to exploit systematically what I have called elsewhere the *hermeneutic contradiction* (Boltanski 2011 [2009]: 84–93), a term designating uncertainty as to whether a spokesperson is indeed expressing the will of the institution or whether, under cover of his institutional role, he is serving as the interpreter of other, hidden interests. How is it possible to accede to truth, that is, to reality, if the agency that is supposed to ensure its protection betrays its own fragility? Because this agency is itself manipulated surreptitiously, the reality it unfolds is an illusory surface reality concealing a much truer but hidden reality underneath.

A second obvious association between the modern political order and detective fiction concerns the extension of suspicion. While in a traditional order, as we have seen, crime is an attribute of the criminal, in detective novels crime can be attributed to any character at all, whatever his or her worth or hierarchical position. Thus no one is exempt a priori from accusation; this fact is a central characteristic of modern states, even in their democratic forms. In the earliest detective

fiction, which took into account the distribution of the characters into unequal social classes, broadly speaking, equality was thus manifested in particular in the form of *equality with respect to crime*. The characters may not be formally equal in terms of the justice system, but they are truly equal in terms of their potential for committing crimes. In a sense, the unlimited extension of suspicion is what lies behind national unity from the vantage point of the state.

Another tension that comes up again and again in crime and espionage fiction is situated at the point of articulation between the nation-state and capitalism. Detective novels, because they deal with the reality found in a local environment, encounter reality in the form of tension between the profoundly unequal social classes that make up the nation, on the one hand, and an impartial state exercising oversight in the person of a government representative – namely, a policeman – on the other. We shall see later on what crucial effects the treatment of this tension had on the basic structure of the classic detective novels, later versions of which can be viewed as transformations.

In the case of spy novels, the tension between the nation-state and capitalism, especially in the realm of finance, is even more pronounced because this genre confronts the relationship between the state, the nation and forces that threaten them directly. Without going into detail for the moment, I can say that at the heart of espionage fiction, at least in its classic forms, we find tension between two systems of logic. On the one hand, there is the logic of the territory, a unified space bounded by borders enclosing a homogeneous population that the state is expected to protect; on the other hand, there is the logic of *flows* that are unknown to the legitimate inhabitants and that the state is unable to prevent, forces that flow throughout the territory and put it at risk.²⁷ These flows are made up of heterogeneous components. They may include agents operating on the political level: spies sent by other powers, anarchists, socialists, agitators, terrorists and the like. Or they may be directly tied to the workings of capitalism: flows of workers, merchandise and, especially, financial currents manipulated by banks in their own interests. Although banks and bankers are implanted on the territory of particular nation-states and may even be granted citizenship, the substance of their activity knows no borders.²⁸ This is why Jews, stateless in essence, among whom revolutionaries and bankers alike are recruited, so often appear in the earliest spy novels as internal enemies. As for *liquid* currency, whose translation into national currency, through the magic of an exchange operation, conceals its foreign provenance, and which passes from

hand to hand without leaving any traces, it is both the instrument and the very symbol of corruption.

This permanent alteration of the purity and transparency of a territory by the invisible flows that traverse it tends to blur access to reality. For example, it becomes impossible to know for sure whether the stranger who introduces himself meekly to you, with the outward appearance of a recognizable social type, is really what he says he is. But the same thing may be true even of old friends, whose lives, seemingly transparent and without incident, may conceal secret, subversive activities. As for the spacious and comfortable dwelling where a novel's protagonist has taken refuge, is it really a hunting lodge, or does it actually mask a small fortress that serves as a hideout for the enemy? Nothing is certain: not the identities of persons, not even the arrangement of things. The generalized suspicion that constitutes a mental outlook in which early twentieth-century psychiatry thought it recognized a new category of illness, paranoia, is thus normal and rational behaviour for someone caught up in the detective/spy cosmos, whether as author, character or reader.

In the constant doubt directed towards what is presented as what is – but which is suspected of not truly being what it appears to be, of appearing under false pretences with the intention to deceive – it is easy to see how a more generalized anxiety is manifested, in crime novels and spy novels: an anxiety linked to the relation between the state and capitalism. One of the fundamental phenomena that accompanied the increase in the power of capitalism, and through which subjectivities were formed throughout the nineteenth century, was the volatility of fortunes tied to the vagaries of finance, especially those of stock markets. A nobody, even a Jew, could become a millionaire in a matter of days – or hours – and be showered with honours, even elevated to the nobility. Conversely, the respectable descendant of an old aristocratic family might see his fortune disappear overnight, as if by witchcraft, because the stock prices of some risky enterprise to which he had committed his fortune mysteriously crashed. However infrequent reversals of this type may have been – their literary representations were based on a few cases that had been widely discussed in the press – in relation to the overwhelming stability of the distribution of capital over the long term, the fact remains that such situations were widely included in European literature in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth: in France, from Balzac to Claudel (in *The Exchange*, for example). Now this plasticity of fortunes and social positions was not only scandalous with reference to stability, it was also largely fantasmatic, imputed to the traditional orders

and the hierarchical values that sustained them. This was especially the case in relation to the new project of stabilizing reality that was established with the formation of nation-states, a fortiori when the arrangements put in place were justified with reference to meritocratic values, as was the case in democracies.²⁹ For the state proved powerless to manage the erratic changes to which the vagaries of finance gave rise. Thus it was unable to carry out the project through which it justified its own existence and through which it had created hope among a very large number of people. It failed to achieve its goal not only because it ran up against the disloyal conspiracies of rival countries and the subversive efforts of anarchist or socialist revolutionaries, but also because it was constantly shackled by the no less revolutionary character of capitalism, on which it sought nevertheless to lean in order to increase its own power.

The contradiction between the nation-state's claim that it could manage and stabilize reality and the effects of capitalism was not expressed directly in these terms, of course, in detective and spy novels, especially in their classic forms. Keeping their distance from so-called 'abstract' conditions, these genres, which aspired first and foremost to distract their readers, brought large-scale political entities into play only by incorporating them into characters capable of giving them a quasi-allegorical presence, such as policemen, leading government officials or stateless bankers. But as readers watching the plots unfold, we can see the contradiction develop; endless complications and reversals allow it to be considered from various angles, so that the anxieties it arouses are sometimes increased and sometimes calmed.

Detective stories and democracy

We have just looked at examples of the kinds of tensions and anxieties that are embedded in detective novels and spy novels; let us now look at these tensions in greater detail. They involve not only the relation between the state, the nation and capitalism, but also the way that clashes among these entities have to be conceived when they are immersed in a political regime that purports to be democratic and that to varying degrees attributes value to the principles of equality and freedom. The questions raised by detective stories, and even more by spy stories, incite readers to contemplate the limits and contradictions of the nation-state when it has to come to terms with capitalism, an entity that may be considered, depending on the perspective adopted,

either as a force incorporated into the state or as an external force threatening the state (or possibly a combination of the two modalities). But the questions also have to do with democracy. At least in their classic forms, these literary genres can be said (and have often been said) to have a pronounced anti-democratic orientation. We find evidence for this in the unmistakably conservative or even reactionary positions taken by their authors, who tend to prefer a powerful state free of the hindrances that democracy brings to its operations.

However, from another standpoint, the political context established by the democratic nation-state is what made the emergence of these new genres possible. As we have seen, detective novels and spy novels need to rely on a reality that has been stabilized by institutions dependent on the state, so that the mystery can stand out against this background. But in order to unfold, these stories must also address readers whose critical capacities are not hindered to the point that they lack the freedom, even the purely internal freedom, to enjoy the thought-experiments that consist in testing the fragility of reality, which is a way of challenging its absolute character. In the European democracies of the late nineteenth century, the unification of reality as well as the critical capacities that made it possible to modify the contours of reality – at least in an imaginary mode – were stimulated by the extension of education on the national level, and perhaps especially by the development of the press, whose role in the formation of a 'national consciousness' has been pointed out by Benedict Anderson (2006 [1983]). Newspapers, in which the earliest detective stories appeared, thus offered a growing public not only a diversity of viewpoints but also and especially the results of a plurality of investigations or, more generally, of depictions of reality, a large number of which took literary form. We need only consider the role played by the social novel, and in particular, in France, by Eugène Sue's Les mystères de Paris, in the formation of the mindsets that would be revealed during the 1848 uprisings (see Riot-Sarcay and Gribaudi 2009) – events, moreover, that led Napoleon III to subject the genre to harsh censorship.

Thus it is not at all surprising that the detective novel and then the spy novel came into being as specific genres in France and Great Britain, countries that played a primary role in the formation of the modern state and in the establishment of political regimes based on parliamentary democracy. The authoritarian state is not very compatible with the development of the detective novel. Its determination to shape reality, and especially to exercise strict control over the way reality is represented, can reach an extreme point where it is no longer

possible to indulge in the subtle literary games that consist in putting reality in crisis, and where it is simply forbidden, on pain of imprisonment or death, to diffuse among a broad public this public use of the powers of the imagination. In an authoritarian context, detective novels and spy novels, when they exist, lose all piquancy, because the reader knows at the outset where the investigation must lead, in that the characters are immediately distributed according to categories and typologies, making it possible to identify the heroes and villains, the friends and enemies of the regime in question. The requirements of propaganda are incompatible with the uncertainty on which the effects of *suspense* depend.

The English state and the French state

The approach adopted in this study – which must be read as a rough sketch – has been to rely in particular, for detective fiction, on two major works with which even a reader not especially devoted to the genre will quite probably be familiar: the Sherlock Holmes stories written by Arthur Conan Doyle between 1891 and 1927, and the adventures of Commissioner Maigret, written by Georges Simenon between 1930 and 1960. Although Simenon's work came later than Doyle's (after Wilkie Collins³⁰ and even more clearly after Edgar Allan Poe [1979], Doyle was the inventor of the genre), it too can be considered as original, in the sense that it gave its canonical form to the French crime novel tradition. This latter, very different, as we shall see, from the Anglo-Saxon version, gradually emerged from the social novel by way of Émile Gaboriau's novels in particular (we shall look into the latter works shortly).

What was most important for me was not to make a contribution to the history of the detective novel – that would have greatly exceeded my expertise, especially in light of the vast erudition that has been mustered by specialists in the genre – but rather to emphasize the relation between the emergence of a literary form and the development of modes of governance that constituted the political environment for that genre. Starting from the hypothesis that the structure of the detective story had the role of introducing, by way of a mystery, some doubt as to the stability and coherence of reality, then assuaging that doubt by bringing the state into play, it was tempting to try to establish a parallel between the forms taken by detective novels in England and in France and the clearly distinct modes of governance and forms of government that were being established in these two countries.

If this comparison makes sense, it ought to allow us to follow the transformations that affect a given structure when it is immersed in contexts and in political histories that differ in important respects. Without going into detail, I can note that both countries are nation-states whose regimes base their authority on parliamentary democracy, states confronted by the rise in power of capitalism and by large-scale social inequalities. Descriptions of the various social classes are quite prominent both in Doyle's narratives and in the Maigret stories. But the position occupied by the state with respect to the nation and its class divisions is constructed very differently in these two literary universes. In Doyle's stories, the English state is presented as a state of law whose legitimacy is based on a compromise between the Crown and the Houses of Parliament, where the great aristocratic families are dominant, governing on both the economic and the political levels. The defence of the state of law and the expansion of the power of capital rely, inseparably, on these families, so that the relations between the state, the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie and the oligarchic elites are not envisaged as a source of tension. The differences between social classes are very pronounced, to be sure, but they are presented as self-evident, rather like differences between natural species. Society appears as the fusion of a people, a nation and a state within a quasi-organic form.

The French political context, as it can be reconstructed from the stories featuring Commissioner Maigret, is entirely different. The difference between social classes is emphasized, as it is in the Sherlock Holmes stories; no character is ever introduced without a mention of the attributes that signal his or her membership in a given class. But the way in which class difference is manifested always retains traces of a critical viewpoint, although that viewpoint usually remains implicit. Instead of being organically integrated into the nation, class difference tends to dilute or corrupt national unity. The nation is presented as a mosaic of milieus, each of which has its own norms and lifestyles, and there is no agency capable of unifying or even of pacifying this composite if not antagonistic whole. And especially not parliaments, which appear as places of corruption and competing interests among various segments of the elite; parliaments merely shift the sort of incipient civil war that haunts society onto the terrain of political stakes and causes. In this context, the state, in the sense that it is the agency responsible for determining and controlling the robustness of reality, is fully embodied in the administrative bureaucracy. This bureaucracy, known in France as the Administration, is the only arrangement that remains above the milieus and the political

parties and is therefore capable of embodying the state and ensuring its continuity. The Administration leaves the various milieus to manage their affairs in their own way and with the normative modes available to them, as long as they do not threaten the general frameworks that the Administration has the mission of maintaining. These frameworks entail, in the first place, the prerogatives of the government itself in critical areas such as public safety, immigration policy and tax levies. This representation of the state is obviously no less realistic, in its way, than the one found in English detective stories, as attested for example by the study Olivier Baruch devoted to the French administrative bureaucracy between the late 1930s and the late 1940s. Here we see the civil service manifesting its indifference towards the political regime in power, showing a quasi-obsessional determination to maintain its prerogatives and its routines, which it considers necessary and sufficient conditions for the continuity of the state (Baruch 1997).

I must conclude this discussion with an expression of regret. The chapter in this book that deals with the earliest spy novels is based only on Anglo-Saxon works, and principally on John Buchan's The Thirty-Nine Steps (1993 [1915]). Buchan himself was a former agent in the British secret service; he published several other novels in the same genre, with the same character (Richard Hannay) as hero, along with many other stories that can be classified as historical novels or adventure novels. Starting in the early twentieth century, we can find novels of espionage in popular English literature, such as those of William Le Queux or Phillips Oppenheim (for whom John Buchan professed a certain admiration, even though Oppenheim was of Jewish origin), and in a more ambitious literary form, Erskine Childers's The Riddle of the Sands (2007 [1903]), which was certainly an inspiration for Buchan. But many specialists maintain that it was only with the publication of The Thirty-Nine Steps that the canons of the genre really began to fall into place. This book, like those I have chosen to study in the case of the detective novel, is also familiar to most readers, chiefly owing to Alfred Hitchcock's 1935 film version (although the film was actually not very faithful to the spirit of the novel).

I have not found an equivalent in French popular literature. There are of course Maurice Leblanc's Arsène Lupin stories, or Gaston Leroux's Rouletabille stories, which include episodes featuring spies, especially of the female variety.³¹ But the subject is never treated as seriously as it is in the English novels. One may suppose that it is the adoption by the author of an ironic perspective, as an attenuated

manifestation of a critical attitude, that prevents the genre from being fully developed. A spy novel, to be convincing, has to be able to count on the readiness of both author and reader to shudder when the dangers that threaten the nation are evoked. But French spy stories do not seem to take these dangers seriously enough, as if the authors' nationalism were either insufficient or excessive. The 'really French' hero manifests so much charm, intelligence and coping skills, his human and intellectual superiority over his enemies is so great, that it is impossible, while reading these narratives, to be truly afraid for a nation in danger.

The policeman and the detective

The relation that links mysteries to crimes constitutes one of the basic conventions of detective fiction. Mysteries are indices of crimes because they are in a relation of cause to effect. For, in a well-ordered reality, nothing mysterious is supposed to happen except when a crime occurs. We can deduce from this that an absolutely innocent world would be coherent and without enigmatic aspects. Reality would be as transparent as clear water. Conversely, a totally criminal world – like the small towns in American popular literature, starting roughly in the 1920s, represented as corrupt through and through (except for someone, usually an outsider, who comes along to set things right; see, for example, Sin City,32 a metaphor for Sodom and Gomorrah) - may have fostered the emergence of hard-boiled or noir fiction, but it left little room for the logic of the detective story. This is why I have not dealt with the noir genre, which constitutes a specific tradition in its own right. The problematics it puts in place has an essentially moral dimension, in the sense that it hinges on questions of good and evil and dramatizes a world in which evil always tends to win out (Tadié 2007). In this chaotic universe, where everything is corrupt and in flux, crime is an everyday affair, and it is hard to tell criminals apart from honest men. The equivalence between mysteries and crimes can be established because reality as presented in detective stories is not only stabilized and coherent – just as nature, discovered by the sciences, with the veil of Isis removed,³³ is presumed to be – but it is also placed under the governance of a moral law – just as society, in the new sociological cosmogonies, is presumed to be.

By the same token, the criminal in a detective story is invested with unusual intellectual capacities. His abilities are based on a deep

knowledge of natural and social laws, and they allow him to conceal his crime in the interstices of reality. While the ordinary criminal does not seek to take control of his physical, spatio-temporal context, and while as an enemy of the laws he transgresses them openly, the shrewd criminal succeeds in manipulating reality, that is, in creating a gap between apparent reality and real reality. This implies that he is imaginative enough to anticipate the way others will perceive the reality in which his crime is going to take place and be concealed. His uncommon knowledge of the lineaments of reality, which allows him to detect its weak spots, is accompanied by self-awareness and even, one might say, of an equally uncommon capacity for empathy. His crafty intelligence lets him put himself in the place of another and adopt the other's way of seeing things in order to thwart it (Detienne and Vernant 1974). A great criminal can thus be characterized by the possession of a *supplement* that distinguishes him from ordinary persons and from low-level criminals (and the criminal in a detective story is almost always a great criminal, except when the author seeks precisely to create an effect of surprise by making some poor wretch responsible for the crime, that is, by playing with the multiple structural transformations allowed by the genre). The criminal does not owe this supplement, which is the source of his strength, to dealings with the spirit world – as in the cases of witchcraft studied by Jeanne Favret-Saada (1980) – but to his intellectual grasp of reality. It allows him to succeed without resorting to what Favret-Saada calls 'ordinary mediations'. He has understood that reality is in fact less robust than it first appears, less robust than the naive souls who are responsible for maintaining it intact would like to believe. It is this intelligence, which can be qualified as perverse from the standpoint of agents of law and order, that criminals share with social critics (an association often made, as we shall see, in spy novels) and also with sociologists.

The investigator is the one who confronts this perversity. Thus the investigator has to have the same sort of unusual intelligence, the difference being that criminals put their intelligence to work subverting order, while investigators use theirs to restore order. The confrontation is a trial or *test*, although not in the sense of institutionalized tests, subject to requirements of justification in a public space, of the sort I focused on in an earlier work (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]). It is a pure test of strength, even if its principal means are not those of physical violence. It escapes 'ordinary mediations', particularly those of the legal variety. One of the principal lessons that detective novels and especially spy novels seem to convey, implicitly,

is that law on its own is powerless to protect the state of law against subversion. Maintaining order implies suspending or sidestepping the law, resorting to a regime of *exception*. But perhaps in this respect the genres we are considering only exploit a fundamental contradiction of the state form in its relation to reality, especially given the differences, inequalities and divisions that tear apart the fabric of a nation on the one hand, and the nation's confinement within uncrossable borders on the other.

This contradiction is brought to light by a feature that belongs, as I see it, to the very structure of the original detective and spy novels: the doubling of the investigator. Alongside the policeman, a representative of the state, there is another character, the detective, who has no official mandate and who nonetheless bears the brunt of the inquiry. Examples include Sherlock Holmes, of course, in Doyle's stories, but also Chesterton's Father Brown, Christie's Hercule Poirot, and many others. In fact, the test of strength between the criminal – who has a supplementary power, as we have seen – and the investigator can put reality to rights, that is, end up attributing the criminal event to a criminal entity, only if the investigator himself has a supplementary power. Now, a policeman, as an agent of the state, has only the power that the state attributes, that is, ordinary police power, within the framework of the law. This power is sufficient to capture ordinary criminals (who belong most often, as we shall see, to the lower classes), but it does not suffice to defeat elite criminals. A policeman knows reality only in its officially determined form. He believes naively in its unity and its sturdiness. The detective, in contrast, possessing the same type of intelligence and the same perversity as the great criminal, also knows how to dig into the crevasses and interstices of reality so as to exploit its inconsistencies, which perhaps means also unveiling its incoherence.

Some may argue, justifiably, that this doubling is absent from the classic French detective story, in which the investigator is a policeman, a civil servant and thus a representative of the state. This was true of Lecoq, the hero of Émile Gaboriau's novels, which are generally viewed as precursors of French detective stories; it was also true of Maigret, who will be our second case study, after Sherlock Holmes. Nevertheless, I contend that, in these cases too, a form of doubling occupies a central place in the narratives. But the doubling does not entail a split between two different characters; rather, it traverses the hero and splits him in two, somewhat as one might speak of a split personality. On one side there is Maigret the *official*; on the other we find Maigret the *man*, a mere human being, just like the criminals

he tracks down, jails and sends to the guillotine. In such a case, the supplementary power an investigator cannot do without if he is to come out ahead – if he is to pass the test, as it were – derives from the official's capacity to be attentive to the singularities that strike the man with whom he cohabits in a single body, the singularities that reach him not by way of erudite reasoning but by way of feelings and intuitions.

Detective fiction, spy fiction and sociology

Detective fiction and spy fiction have fascinated sociologists for a long time. Between these two ways of apprehending reality, which developed gradually during roughly the same time period, the first with the means of fiction, the second with the ambitions of science, there are correspondences - probably not accidental - that arise on two different levels. The first, which we have already had occasion to note, concerns social reality grasped as fact or as nature, endowed with its own mode of being; among other things, it is relatively autonomous in relation to its physical underpinnings. Social reality exists prior to the wills of individual subjects, and these subjects have no choice but to take it into account. It can even be envisaged as an essential determining factor in their actions. Social reality, established as a particular society, is most often identified with the populations and arrangements – governmental, administrative and legal in particular – that are included within the borders of a nation-state ('French society', 'English society', 'German society', and so on). Now, as I have tried to show, this societal substratum, with its regularities, its routines and its way of making the course of things predictable, constitutes the background on which detective fiction and spy fiction necessarily rely.

But sociology also has something in common with detective stories in a different respect, one that opens up more troubling perspectives. Like detective fiction, and perhaps especially like spy fiction, sociology constantly tests the *reality of reality*, or, to put it another way, it challenges *apparent* reality and seeks to reach a reality that is more hidden, more profound and more *real*. It does this while also relying on the identification of enigmas or *mysteries*, that is, events or phenomena that appear to contradict reality, or at least cannot readily be integrated into the pictures generally used to give meaning to what is happening. This deconstruction of apparent reality has gone in very different directions with different authors and traditions. Let us look at several examples.

The most obvious convergences involve approaches that stress the uncertainties surrounding action and the way actors experience the fragility of reality, even in its seemingly most ordinary dimensions, during their everyday interactions. This is the case with all the traditions that take their inspiration from pragmatism and/ or phenomenology and start from the viewpoint of the actor in a specific situation. These branches of sociology put at the centre of their descriptions both the enterprise of building a presentable selfimage, to which persons devote themselves in their interactions with others, and the work of interpretation they have to undertake to try to stabilize a representation of their social (and often their physical) environment. This is particularly clear in what is known as interactionist sociology, which Erving Goffman's work illustrates most strikingly. By considering the social world as a theatre, complete with stage and wings, Goffman stretches the limits of the ancient metaphor of the theatrum mundi³⁴ and consequently extends not only the opposition between appearances and what they conceal but also a conception of reality as artefact that renews the philosophical traditions of scepticism from which it stems.

It has thus been possible to show that, among the main characters Goffman uses to illustrate his analyses – especially in his early work dealing with 'self-presentation' (1959) - there are actors (and the term can be understood in two senses) whose performance is based on the construction of appearances; the border zone separating the stage from the wings constitutes the site par excellence where the transformative capacities of these actors are manifested. The actors in question may be stage performers, but they may also be household servants, salesmen, professionals whose activities rely on deception - for example, swindlers, thieves, bookies, pickpockets, prostitutes - and, of course, spies (Boltanski 1973a). This way of envisaging reality is hardly peculiar to Goffman, however; we find it expressed in various ways in a host of works produced over the last half-century, works inspired by phenomenology, pragmatism, interactionism or ethnomethodology, in which the enterprise of constructing reality is central to their perspectives (Hacking 1999).

The association between detective and spy novels on the one hand and sociology on the other does not stop here, however; it can be extended to sociological traditions that, starting from a broad overview and inspired in particular by positivism, seek to sketch social reality as a whole, as it *really* is. These approaches do not begin, like the ones described above, with individuals immersed in situations; rather, they adopt a global perspective and base their descriptions

on relations among entities known as 'collective', that is, among sets comprising a more or less large number of human beings brought together by virtue of some specifiable relationship. The preferred instrument of sociologists working along these lines is a statistical tool that envisages individuals inasmuch as they are subsumed in categories.

These approaches to sociology place the question of *power* at the heart of their problematics: they focus on the way in which society is articulated with the state, political power with economic power, legally pre-defined categories with categories whose tenor and robustness are detected by statistical analyses even though they have not benefited from legal recognition. Among numerous versions of this paradigm - some inspired by American structuralist functionalism, others by Durkheimian thinking, still others by Marxism – a particularly enlightening example is found in Pierre Bourdieu's work (1984 [1979]). Bourdieu stresses the gap between the official and the unofficial, in particular the gap between the officially recognized power of certain actors or certain groups potentially equipped with a legal mandate and the real power exercised surreptitiously by other actors or groups whose solidarity is based on different forms of connection: family ties, common economic interests or personal bonds such as friendship. While the power that members of the first group are thought to exercise may boast of legitimacy, even if it is actually in part illusory, the power of members of the second group, much more real but hidden, is based on a form of connivance that, in a nationstate self-identified as democratic, has no legal expression.

This type of approach fulfils an expectation to which macrosociology is obliged to respond if it wants to be recognized as an autonomous science. The expectation has to do with the difference between sociology and administrative disciplines, and thus with the nature and importance of the added value offered by sociological description as compared to the descriptions of society that can be produced by state-sponsored agencies relying solely or primarily on officially recognized, legally defined categories and divisions. The social utility of a sociology that merely reproduced the official divisions would obviously be easy to contest. But the broader sociological enterprise I am describing necessarily includes, at least potentially, a critical orientation (responsibility for which may be more or less explicitly assumed), since it challenges official reality and unveils a different, much more real but hidden reality. Thus it meets with hostility on the part of those who are bent on defending the reality of the state of law, and it enters into controversies focused

on the value – that is, the truth and social utility – of the pictures it paints.

The question of conspiracy, which is central to detective novels and even more so to spy novels, is also at the heart of these controversies over sociological description. In fact, in its broadest definition, the notion of conspiracy refers to solidarities, connivances and personal ties woven surreptitiously for the purpose of seizing power or wielding it in secret. Sociology can thus be accused of producing descriptions that are not only illusory but dangerous, in the sense that, casting doubt on official representations, it helps spread suspicion, sowing seeds of discord in society as a whole and thereby weakening the authority of the state. In what sense are the entities that sociology takes as its object 'real'? To what extent is it acceptable to impute will and intentionality to collective entities? How can one evaluate the degree of real solidarity that links the individual actors who make up these entities? How can one set limits to the enterprise of unveiling, an enterprise that in some sense could be pursued endlessly? These are some of the questions raised by macrosociological descriptions that we shall examine in detail later on. For the time being, it suffices to note that these questions can be raised in a similar way about spy novels that unveil vast conspiracies, when the texts are taken seriously enough by a large enough number of readers to generate arguments and debates about their credibility and to arouse reactions and polemics. (Dan Brown's Da Vinci Code [2004] is a recent example.)

To conclude these initial remarks concerning potential associations between detective and spy fiction on the one hand and sociology on the other, let us note that we may be able to take the analogies a little further if we compare the more or less Anglo-Saxon forms of these two ways of treating the question of reality with the more or less Continental forms. Carlo Ginzburg's seminal article on the paradigm of the clue (1989 [1979]) and numerous subsequent studies have brought to light possible analogies between the Sherlock Holmes approach and those inspired by pragmatist theories, especially in the branches of the social sciences that rely on theories of action, from interactionist sociologies to microhistory.³⁵ In Simenon's stories, Maigret's *modus operandi* is deliberately opposed to that of Sherlock Holmes. Even so, we can identify similarities between the French detective stories and sociology if we look at sociological approaches developed in France, often inspired by both Durkheim and Marx, that have focused on the study of groups, especially on the entities known as milieus or social classes.

Detective fiction and spy fiction as systems of transformation

I have limited myself, in this study, to the earliest expressions of the forms that interest me: those I have called the *classic* examples of detective and spy fiction. As I see it, the original texts established a form whose later expressions constitute transformations. While the analysis of the entire set of works belonging to these genres would be humanly impossible, given their vast numbers, the analysis of a corpus including examples from different moments in the development of the genres would make it possible to extend the study with the goal of bringing to light a system of transformations that presumably obeys somewhat rigorous rules. We may suppose that such a system would include figures, and in particular relatively stable actants – the mystery, the crime, the police officer, the detective, the question of attribution and so on, in the case of detective fiction; the conspiracy, the state, the solitary hero on the run, secret societies or foreign powers and so on, in the case of novels of espionage – and, of course, in both cases, the confrontation between an apparent but illusory reality and a real but hidden reality. Still, the way the positions of actant are filled and the value attributed to them have unquestionably varied a great deal as the genres have evolved.

These variations are presumably subject to two very different but interconnected driving forces. On the one hand, there is a structural necessity, the saturation of a type of narrative arrangement that leads to the search for innovative approaches, rather like the search for new musical or poetic forms. ³⁶ This principle of variation certainly took on increasing importance as the detective gradually came to constitute a specific literary genre with its own agencies of consecration: that is, as it became a *field*, in Pierre Bourdieu's sense (1984 [1979]).³⁷ Detective fiction today, as a field, includes a very large number of authors distributed among various countries and languages, authors who read one another and seek to distinguish themselves from their predecessors and competitors in order to win recognition from their peers and to stand out in the eyes of their readers.³⁸ This phenomenon has now taken on a global dimension, as is attested, for example, by the recent surge in popularity of Scandinavian crime fiction. But the transformations of the detective novel, and perhaps especially of the spy novel, also have political modalities. As we have seen, they exploit the possibility that the reality supported by the state can be thrown into crisis, but only provided that the state's power to become master of reality once again is recognized in the end. In their primitive forms, these genres are thus unambiguously conservative, even if some of their

inflections have critical overtones. Thus in the American noir novel that developed between the late 1920s and the 1940s, the 'private eye' remained a more or less morally pure and humanly authentic being (even though he was something of a loser, not a superman), but he found himself facing two types of adversaries and/or partners. On the one hand, there were corrupt cops and, on the other, criminals, who themselves could be categorized broadly speaking in terms of their social class or type, ranging between truly perverse characters and manipulated or subjugated quasi-victims. This is the schema that we find, by and large, in the forms of *néo-polar* detective fiction that took hold in Europe in the 1970s, especially in the work of Jean-Patrick Manchette.

The spy novel underwent even more radical transformations of the same sort, at least in part. Starting roughly in the 1950s, negative figures were no longer embodied exclusively in secret societies, anarchists or agents of foreign powers, but also in the very members of the intelligence services of the states to which the hero belonged, or least in some of these members, the level of whose cynicism seemed to correlate with their rank (see Bloom 1990). The short stories published in the 1920s in which Somerset Maugham drew on his experience as an Intelligence Service agent during the First World War (1977) introduced a sceptical, cynical posture into the genre, along with a kind of dandvism that can be found in many later works. But Maugham did not take the state as an explicit target. It was different with Eric Ambler (whose contributions we shall examine when we look closely at espionage fiction): in the six spy novels he wrote between 1936 and 1940, he dramatized the perversity of state intelligence agencies, first and foremost those of the fascist countries, but also those of Great Britain. His work is generally considered to have had a powerful influence on two later masters of the English spy novel, Graham Greene and John Le Carré. Nevertheless, it is hard to believe that this evolution, which transformed the state from an agency protecting the public against criminals into a criminal state, a major factor of insecurity, was solely the product of laws of internal transformation specific to the genres we are considering. The period that came into being with the rise of fascist and Stalinist states, then with the Second World War and even more with the Cold War, was marked by an unprecedented expansion of secret services within the western democracies, and the interventions of these agencies both outside the nation-states in question and within them.

Rapidly or belatedly, depending on the case, investigative journalism began to describe and make public the way in which state agents

secretly carried out acts of violence or deception, act that were not only morally but legally inadmissible, and which would thus have been penalized by the state had they been committed by ordinary persons. The dramatization of the figure of the criminal state presupposes that the 'personhood' of the state is distributed between two different actants carrying out actions that are also different in nature. On the one hand, we have the state as a legal person, endowed with public visibility. Its acts result from decisions that are legitimate (based on law) and transparent: they must be subject to public justification. On the other hand, we have the state as brute force, acting in secret, according to its own law, foreign to ordinary morality, with motives grounded in the national interest. The acts inspired by the national interest can be subject to justification, always more or less along the lines of legitimate self-defence, but they are not subject to moral justification. The violence inherent in such acts can be justified only retrospectively and in terms of their consequences. If the acts had not been committed, the survival of the state would have been jeopardized. To be made public, such justifications have to bank on a perceived equivalence between the defence of the state and the protection of the common good, something that often seems highly contestable, especially in periods and geographical regions where power has brutally changed hands.

The existence of a differential between the values proclaimed by a legitimate state and the violent or deceptive acts and deeds it carries out surreptitiously - between the official reality and the hidden reality – tends to call the very tenor of reality into question. In fact, the state, accompanied by its cortège of spokespersons, journalists, experts, scientists, judges, professors and the like, constitutes the institution that claims ultimate responsibility for maintaining reality, as we have seen. It is up to the state to restore reality to its rightful place by truthful speech, after reality has been troubled by mysterious events that open the way to a plurality of incompatible interpretations and, consequently, to discord, even to something like civil war, at least potentially. But this truth-telling function, on which belief in the reality of reality depends and which is one of the primordial functions justifying the very existence of the state as an institution made up of institutions, is cast into doubt to a considerable extent when the contradiction between its two avatars, the transparent, legal, official version of truth and the hidden, criminal, unofficial version is revealed. If the suspicion that there are vast conspiracies against the state, with the implication that there are a great number of two-faced actors, is already very troubling for reality, even in the most ordi-

nary situations, the disturbance can only be dramatically intensified when the state itself is suspected of being the principal instigator of conspiracies.

This suspicion is reinforced by the considerable means available to the state. The major players even today enjoy resources that vastly outweigh those available to private agencies - companies, associations, non-governmental organizations, churches, organizations deemed 'criminal' (by states) and so on. Beyond the availability of immense financial resources, states have the capacity to coordinate the actions of a multiplicity of operators, a capacity that largely exceeds anything their non-state competitors can do in this realm. Now, the possibility of coordinating the actions of a large number of persons who may not even be aware of one another is one of the distinguishing features of a conspiracy, with the sole difference that in the case of a conspiracy the coordination is secret, whereas in the case of operations carried out officially by a state it is supposed to be public and thus apt to be known by all. But then what is the status of state enterprises that have a secret or at least a non-public character and that are nevertheless vast in scope?

Here we touch on the convergence of the interests and anxieties that permeate detective and spy fiction on the one hand, sociology and, ultimately, persons qualified as paranoid on the other. Detective stories and sociology have in common with paranoid individuals the way they make problematic (in the first case) and problematize (in the second) the question of where reality stands, what holds it together, what argumentative structures and what systems of proof are available to grant credibility to one particular picture of reality rather than some other. We can thus propose the hypothesis that, from the late nineteenth century to our own day, the very same type of anxiety has permeated a popular literary genre, led to the invention of a new mental illness, invested a discipline with scientific pretensions and penetrated countless – if not all – human minds.

The detective without attachments

Why were detective stories, which deal with matters involving the police, as their name implies, established at least at first on the basis of a distinction, even an opposition, between the figures of the detective and the policeman? The distinction is accentuated when the detective functions on a freelance basis or even as a simple amateur, as is often the case. Students of the genre who have sought to interpret the meaning of this disjunction have generally stressed the way a categorical separation is established between the intellectual means used by detectives to solve mysteries, on the one hand, and the instruments available to policemen, means associated with state violence, on the other: this distinction clearly reproduces the hierarchical distinction between (lofty) intellectual tasks and (lowly) material tasks. These authors have been especially struck, and rightly so, by the analogy between the intellectual means detectives apply to an endeavour consisting essentially in a manhunt, and the intellectual means brought to bear by scientists trying to solve a scientific mystery; this analogy is evoked quite insistently, moreover, by the masters of the genre. Thus for Siegfried Kracauer, one of the first philosophers to take an interest in this minor genre, the detective novel is first of all a symptom of the invasion of reality by what he calls ratio (1981 [1922–5]). This purely instrumental use of reason has become a 'finality without end', in Kracauer's view; it is used to make sense of a world deprived of meaning, the world towards which modernity is heading. Similarly, some sixty years later, Carlo Ginzburg explores the inferences made by detectives in a well-known article devoted to 'clues' (1989 [1979]). Ginzburg's discussion has been extended by a number of studies,

several of which establish parallels between Sherlock Holmes's method and semiology in the form it took during roughly the same period in the work of Charles Sanders Peirce.¹

The mode of reasoning with which the earliest detective story writers endowed the figure of the detective merits further examination, and we shall look more closely at it later. But first I should like to look at the work of Arthur Conan Doyle in order to highlight a different aspect of the separation between detective work – based entirely on cogitation – and police work, based entirely on force. We must note that this disjunction, which is found very rarely, if at all, in the course of everyday life, was an invention of the crime novel, a crucial invention in the sense that its presence defines the genre. The earliest works of crime fiction, the standard-setting stories by Doyle and Edgar Allan Poe,² established a structure that was maintained, with transformations, in the multiple works that followed, however radically different these may have been in their themes or in their aesthetic, political or moral orientations.

The fifty-six short stories and four novels that relate the adventures of Sherlock Holmes, published between 1887 and 1927, can be situated among a set of quite diverse works, very uneven in literary quality, that embody in characters and give narrative equivalents for new categorial understandings and arrangements marking the birth of new societal and political forms.³ The almost immediate and widespread enthusiasm for such works can be attributed to their historical specificity. Few literary characters have been as rapidly and as enduringly acclaimed as was Sherlock Holmes. As early as the 1890s, the Holmes stories met with great success; they quickly became famous internationally, and their fame continued to grow during the first half of the nineteenth century. Doyle, who had killed off his character in 1893 ('The Final Problem'), was obliged to resurrect him in 1901 (The Hound of the Baskervilles). Starting in the early twentieth century, replicas of Holmes appeared under various names (like Maurice Leblanc's Herlock Sholmes); during the mid-century post-war period, there was a wave of 'apocryphal' novels (specialists have identified some fifty of these⁴). The latter works often entail narratives that fill in the details of the many mysteries to which Dr Watson refers, in the Sherlock Holmes corpus, only by their titles, stories Watson reserves for a later occasion but that Doyle never actually wrote. The Sherlock Holmes stories were adapted for the cinema even before the First World War I; we can count more than 200 film adaptations to date.⁵ Finally, Sherlock Holmes fan clubs were created, starting in 1934 with 'The Baker Street Irregulars' in New York; today, there may

be as many as 500 such clubs throughout the world (Oudin 1997). As Julian Symons has remarked, Holmes fanatics have come to treat this fictional character as if he were a real person, for example by intervening in his investigations to propose alternative solutions, or by collecting relics of his passage on earth, such as an armchair in a pub that bears his name (Symons 1994: 25).

It seems likely that works sacralized to such an extent owe their fascination to the fact that they dramatize the contradictions anchored in a given social order, contradictions that are particularly obvious and disturbing in periods when a still-uncertain order is in the process of being instituted. The focus on contradictions between incompatible social groups that are nevertheless all indispensable to the achievement of a certain order is what gives these works a metaphysical rather than a literary character. Highlighting these contradictions brings into focus the frequently-noted analogy between such works and myths - and we have seen, following Lévi-Strauss, that myths constitute operators aiming to examine a contradiction from all possible angles, not so as to surpass it dialectically but simply so as to acclimatize it. Making contradiction the focus of a plot gives it a self-evident character, that of something already in place that one can live with, or at least tolerate, in the tacit mode of 'it goes without saying'. Let me mention one other example of such mythic works, one of the most famous (and most magnificent) of the numerous stories written by Robert Louis Stevenson, The Strange Case of Dr Iekvll and Mr Hyde (2000 [1886]); this book, based on the figure of the double, is clearly relevant to the object of the present study.⁶

Masters and servants

First, a word about the detective's social world. Envisaged from the (naive) viewpoint of sociology, the world in which Sherlock Holmes operates is a class society, presented as if social classes were a self-evident natural phenomenon. This particular class-based society consists essentially of masters and servants, following a model found in many Victorian novels. The masters, whose inherited or earned wealth is taken for granted, are characterized above all by their membership in important and venerable families.⁷ Their fortunes arose from rental income and investments alike, the English aristocracy having become involved earlier and more deeply than that of the continent in trade, mining, industry and finance, often in connection with the expansion of the Empire (Mann 1993: 92–136). The difference

between the nobility and the middle class thus was not the same as the difference found in France, for example, during the same period. Still, at a given level of wealth, the length of time the family had belonged to the dominant class was perhaps the most important criterion for differentiation, especially in terms of honourability, that is, the degree to which a person could be considered a priori as irreproachable or, on the contrary, as more or less *suspect*. The masters in these stories thus distinguish themselves (we shall come back to this point shortly) from those who can be called the newly rich, those whose wealth results from activities they have pursued during their own lifetimes (often in questionable enterprises in America or South Africa), rather than from inheritance. While masters are refined and complex by nature, the newly rich tend to be rough and crude.

The servant class includes all those who serve masters in their grandeur, one way or another. But this class can be separated into two groups: ordinary domestic servants and an elite servant class. The first group encompasses all the members of the lower classes: peasants, labourers, gardeners, innkeepers, cooks, maids, coachmen and the like. They are envisaged only in terms of the subordinate relation⁸ that subjects them to the masters whose projects they support or undermine. As for the elite class of servants, they are duplicates of their masters minus the grandeur: stewards, personal valets, governesses, teachers and especially preceptors charged with the education of children. Those who belong to the lower class of servants are of limited intelligence, when they are not simply stupid; they are visibly coarse and potentially transgressive. 10 Owning nothing of their own, they have nothing to defend, thus no values in the moral sense of the term, or practically none, and they readily succumb to anarchy. They are nonetheless subject to two types of contradictory laws. On the one hand, their actions are determined by the rather simple and very strict rules they have to follow in doing their work: saddling horses, cleaning houses, raking walkways and so on. These rules establish the framework for highly particularized tasks, most often manual labour, whose achievement can be narrowly specified because it is accomplished in stabilized contexts. On the other hand, the spontaneously transgressive and potentially rebellious nature of these individuals leads them to flout the rules whenever they think they can do so without risk. Still, this nature itself, even in its rebellious dimensions, obeys laws comparable to those established by the natural sciences, and this makes the servants' behaviour easy to interpret, even in the numerous instances in which they disobey the rules they are supposed to follow. In this respect they are somewhat comparable to domestic

animals: trained to obey but apt to be recalcitrant, although always in a predictable way for anyone who knows their nature.

The elite servants carry out tasks that are partly or wholly of the intellectual sort. These tasks are hard to distinguish from those that could or should be carried out by the masters, except that they are specialized, restricted to one particular domain, whereas the masters pursue activities that can embrace all aspects of reality. The elite servants thus substitute for their masters by carrying out specific tasks, from managing an estate to teaching children. In the case of governesses, butlers or personal valets, who are generally of a certain age, they may look after the most trivial aspects of daily life; they are obliged to be involved in their masters private lives and consequently to adopt their habits and manners, but at a lower level, in ways that are often mocked as ridiculous. Finally, the elite servants, even though they are as completely subordinate to their masters as the lower-level servants are, can nevertheless be given a mandate by the master to exercise power over their subalterns.

The masters are not idle. They hold positions that lead them to act in relation to large-scale entities or agencies, in the service of objectives that exceed their capacities as physical persons. These entities are sometimes specified as Empire, Crown, or state - considered as powers - or they may be left vague, in which case it is safe to say that these lofty personages are at the service of the fuzzy set referred to in Holmesian rhetoric when it comes to defending 'society' or preserving 'order'. Because the masters' actions are oriented towards the satisfaction of very general goals, they cannot be strictly defined by rules. Indeed, the observation of rules is a handicap when the context of the action is uncertain and is constantly being modified, which is the case in most of the situations in which masters are called to intervene. 13 This is particularly apparent when the objectives to be attained concern – as they frequently do – the relation between the state (or the Empire) and other states (or other empires), so that the goals are diplomatic or strategic and involve matters of peace or war. 14

Like those who belong to the lower order of domestic servants, masters may be induced to flout rules in order to attain their own higher objectives. But in their case the rules are not broken, properly speaking. They are simply suspended or momentarily bypassed. Whereas, for the lower orders, breaking a rule results from a combination of inborn wildness and purely individual interest, in the masters' case, getting around a rule is motivated by concern for the common good, so that those who do this still remain 'within the spirit

of the rules'. The capacity of masters to stay within the spirit of the law is virtually flawless – if only because they make the laws.

These differing ways of relating to rules, which distinguish masters from servants, have to be understood in connection with the contrasting ways in which the two groups are educated. Members of the servant class have been subjected to a process of inculcation that can be compared to dressage. Thus, it may be of relatively short duration and relatively inexpensive; in any case, it remains superficial; it does not penetrate the depths of these people's nature, which remains recalcitrant and dim-witted. This is why the behaviour of the lower classes must always be closely controlled. The sense of obedience, drummed into members of the servant class by punishments, can always be reactivated by new punishments, or by the threat of punishment. Masters, on the contrary, must be given a prolonged and costly education because they are destined to fulfil goals whose contours are imprecise and whose orientations can be modified in relation to changes that affect the contexts in which actions are carried out, and because masters can succeed only if they are autonomous, which presupposes that they are not constantly controlled. Their education must reach the depths of their nature; put differently, it must engender in them a 'second nature' (to borrow an expression often used by Pierre Bourdieu), so that they are capable of self-control. This necessity justifies the demanding and sometimes baroque pedagogical work – a composite of classical humanities, religion, sexual controls and convoluted corporal punishments - carried out in the schools designed for the children of the dominant classes.

In terms of the relation to rules, elite servants occupy an ambiguous, unstable position that presents certain risks. Having to carry out functions in which they substitute for their masters, they cannot be as strictly subjected to rules as are those who belong to the lower orders. To be sure, their tasks are specialized, and their field of application does not involve the welfare of the state or the Empire, but only that of the master's estate. Still, to carry them out satisfactorily, these servants have to make choices, and this implies that they have a certain autonomy. Their actions cannot be constantly controlled; they are subject to an overall evaluation according to the results achieved. These servants, whose functions require the use of intellectual capacities, are provided with an education halfway between that of the masters and that of the lower orders. They are not expected to act so much in the spirit of the law as in the spirit of their master, that is, as their master would act in the circumstances in which they are called to intervene. But the latitude allowed them always masks a degree of

uncertainty and risk, because the limited training they have received does not guarantee that they are capable of a high level of self-control. They know enough about this to mimic proper manners, but one cannot be sure that they have really internalized these behaviours. It is especially in this category that one encounters troubled, hypocritical, duplicitous individuals – people who cannot be trusted.

Alongside these primary characters, 'primary' at least in the sense that they are numerous, we must add some secondary figures whose role is nevertheless important, even essential, to the construction of mysteries. Let us mention, first, the newly rich, whom we have already encountered. Vulgar and hard-nosed, owing to their plebeian origins, but intelligent (otherwise they would not have made their fortunes), they pursue strictly individual objectives without any consideration whatsoever for the common good. Nevertheless, the newly rich may deceive the world around them, for they have the outward appearances of masters: money, power, an estate, a huge home, servants¹⁵ and so on. Their shady character is particularly striking when they are foreigners, as is often the case. Let us add that, generally speaking, in this world foreigners are inscrutable and their behaviour is often difficult to interpret; this makes them naturally suspect. 16 These disquieting characteristics are accentuated when it comes to women, a situation that ought to incite English men to prefer English women over their foreign counterparts (Grignon 2002). Unfortunately, this is not always the case, and some men pay very dearly for having been seduced by exotic beauties in their youth and/or during their travels: the most dangerous, it seems, come from Spain or Latin America, where women are particularly hot-blooded and little given to self-control.¹⁷ And, as has often been noted, such a suspicion comes close to applying to women in general, for their portraits are often either idealized ('woman') or else stereotyped and somewhat degrading. Holmesian society is 'entirely made for men', with its pipes, its clubs, its whisky and its great criminals. One historian of detective and spy fiction, LeRoy Panek, thus notes that the narrative framework in which the Sherlock Holmes stories are set, that is, the framework of Edwardian adventure stories, is impregnated with what he calls 'public school culture', with its tales for adolescents stressing friendship, bravado, strength, honour and self-control, and of which the creation of the Boy Scout movement by Robert Baden-Powell in 1907 was one expression (Panek 1981: 43-5). The culture of masculinity and relationships among boys made the introduction of explicit references to sexuality into the narratives inconceivable, and it excluded the very possibility of

considering women other than as helpers, victims or threats (Kestner 2000: 44–5).

Civil servants appear essentially as policemen, agents of public safety and representatives of the state of law. A policeman is a sort of elite servant, except that he serves the state rather than the private estate of a master. A somewhat dull-witted character, his tendency is to enforce the law to the letter because he fails to grasp its spirit. Nevertheless, he is always respectable, that is, all of a piece; there is no duplicity here. He can be trusted, within the limits of his abilities.¹⁹

Finally, I must not neglect to mention a character who constitutes a species of which he is the sole representative, the evil genius Professor Moriarty. He has all the properties of a master: lofty social origins, education in the best institutions, great culture, remarkable intelligence, qualities to which must be added an indomitable coldbloodedness that attests, in a way, to his capacity for self-control. But his faculties are all placed at the service of evil. His only goal is the destruction of the social order on the national and even the transnational level. He is an anarchist: the counter-master, as it were. While masters reign over a population of servants, he reigns over a population of ne'er-do-wells whom he mobilizes and manipulates in order to carry out his great plot against organized society. Servants and ne'er-do-wells are the two subcategories available to the lower classes: domesticated in the first case, turned savage in the second. By managing to coordinate the actions of the ne'er-do-wells, who are all criminals, at least potentially, the counter-master endows himself with a veritable army. He is the detective's adversary par excellence, and his inverse double, his evil twin. Although Moriarty is unique in his kind²⁰ (as Sherlock Holmes is in his²¹), certain of his traits are found in other evil-doers who combine criminal instincts with asocial (that is, revolutionary) passions: the particular perversity of these figures lies in the fact that they come from high society and they have betrayed their class.²²

Legality and normality

A mystery, as we have seen, presents itself in the form of a singularity, a source of uncertainty, whose salience is all the greater in that it stands out against the background of a particularly robust reality in which everything holds together and everything therefore seems predictable. The singularity in question often appears unimportant or inconsequential. But it attracts the attention of a character (the one

who solicits the intervention of the detective at the beginning of each story), and it arouses that person's perplexity by the mere fact that it is a singularity, that is, an action, a spoken word, a manner of being or an event that breaks with the ordinary course of things – whether that person had considered the ordinary course of things satisfactory or not. Here, then, is the mystery: in the workings of the social order, a "Something" (as Siegfried Kracauer puts it) capable of interrupting their regularity is manifested. The detective's work consists in mentally anticipating the slippage from singularity to crime, a slippage that the series of events reported always manages to achieve sooner or later. Each singularity is thus presented as a potential crime, that is, not only as the sign or symptom of a crime, but as something that already, in itself, belongs to the order of crime.

And yet, generally speaking, these singularities do not constitute violations of the law. They remain on the near side of the legal order. But they signify the possibility of a transgression of the natural order of society, that is, of reality, conceived as a higher law, a more fundamental reality whose legality, in the sense of laws 'made by Princes' (as Durkheim describes them, more or less, to distinguish them from social laws), presents only a crude equivalent of the higher form. For even if a legal framework inseparable from the state constitutes the regulating principle of reality in the sense that it gives the state the authority it requires to exercise its power over reality, such a framework can never encompass reality as a whole. The idea of a reality in which all behaviour would be framed by explicit legal rules is almost inconceivable, so that legality cannot be conceived except as an aid to normality. Crimes, then, are nothing but infringements on normality; they involve elements intervening in the course of events that are not only subjected to norms but also determined by explicit legal provisions, the entire set of which constitutes legality as such. But, for the same reasons, there is a continuum running from legality to normality along which it is impossible to assign clear dividing lines. Legality is meant to cover the entire field of normality; it is only for reasons that may be called practical, technical or economic – given the costs not only of making laws but of having them applied by an executive agency - that this coverage is always somewhat imperfect, and also, it must be said, circumstantial. For, when circumstances oblige, that is, when the state considers itself in danger and thus confers on itself a right of legitimate defence, the uncertain boundary between normality and legality may be blurred. The state authorizes itself not only to rule on what normality is as a whole, but also to intervene in the entire field of norms just as it would intervene in the field of law. By

this operation, which characterizes a state of exception, legality is abolished.

It is against a background of normality that the singularities stand out, in such a way that the subjects whose uneasiness they arouse manifest what can be called their *ordinary sense* of *normality*. This sense is implicitly understood as a form of *common sense*, which is naturally also present in the detective. Through the intermediary of this common sense of normality, the uneasiness of ordinary characters who are blinkered by the limits of their functions can arouse the interest of the detective and stir up his boundless aptitude for reconstituting all the linkages through which reality holds together. This is where his exceptional intelligence resides.

This intelligence is unlimited, like that of the masters; while the detective's executive power, in contrast, is limited, we shall see that it is far from non-existent. It is manifested, especially in the narrative segments where the story reaches its conclusion, through actions aimed at re-establishing normality by imposing restorative penalties, actions that in themselves often exceed the bounds of legality. As in the case of the state of exception evoked earlier, the detective positions himself at the watershed point between singularity and crime, precisely where the two are still indistinguishable, that is, at the point where it is impossible to tell the difference between normality and legality. The detective is both the supreme authority who enforces the Law and an actor who operates above the laws. He is the right arm of justice inasmuch as justice is transcendent: he palliates both the weaknesses of immanent justice and the inadequacies of state justice when the latter ties its own hands by chaining itself to legality. He is thus the one who manifests the transcendence of the state against the sort of penchant for abdication that always threatens the state of law.

This dual vantage point is what distinguishes the detective from the policeman with whom he collaborates. The two are intimately united by a shared attachment to normality; they are similarly horrified by crime, and also, of course, by the singularity that not only anticipates and signifies crime but is also in effect consubstantial with it. Unlike the detective, however, the policeman is a mere functionary, a good sort but limited to his job description; his actions and his intelligence are confined within the limits of legality. The policeman has a tendency to see evil only where the conduct of the accused transgresses an explicit legal rule. This is why he so often makes errors in judgement that are apt to turn into legal errors. The detective, for his part, sees evil everywhere. He knows that evil is omnipresent, in the sense that abnormality is everywhere, always

ready to infiltrate the order of normality – that is, reality. The slightest singularity, the slightest salience that intervenes to scratch the seamless tissue of reality constitutes the snag that gives him a hold on the hidden evil and triggers his passion for a manhunt: before zeroing in on the criminal, whose secret essence is revealed only at the end of the story, he goes after *suspects*. And all the individuals who turn up on his path are suspects in his eyes. This generalized suspicion is the way his passion for justice is manifested.

Confronting the singularities that they say they have witnessed, those who turn to the detective, looking to him to transform their uneasiness into an enigma, fall back in their naivety on two systems of interpretation, which their interlocutor always dismisses. The first appeals to the supernatural.²³ The second refers to pathological behaviours, in the psychiatric sense. Reference to the supernatural presupposes a world peopled with gods, spirits or devils who are normally confined to the threshold of reality but sometimes decide to intervene in reality and disrupt its order. Their will, their desires, their psychology and the way they interact with the world of things give no access to the type of inferences in which the detective is a confirmed expert. In fact, these inferences presuppose the existence of a robust reality, that is, of a reality in which everything holds together, in the sense that each new proposition, to be judged acceptable, has to be able to justify the relations that it weaves with other propositions already held to be true. This has to happen in such a way that the propositional network, although it is unlimited by construction, can allow for inferential trajectories that connect a multiplicity of beings – natural objects, artefacts, events, human beings endowed with social, psychological and physical properties or animals determined by their instincts and so on - among which unified forces and flows nevertheless circulate, however diverse they may be.²⁴

It is the capacity to make this fundamental calculability operational that characterizes the detective's intelligence. This capacity would prove deficient if certain propositions were calculable according to an inferential apparatus of one type and others were calculable according to a different inferential apparatus, with no way for the relation between these two apparatuses to take on specifiable forms. Sherlock Holmes's intellectual superiority ultimately resides wholly in the way he pushes to the limit the presuppositions that underlie the idea of *common sense*, that is, the certainty of a correspondence between the structure of reality and the structure of the cognitive instruments available to human beings so that they can achieve knowledge of reality.²⁵ It is by relying on these correspondences that the detective

can clear up mysteries that remain obscure for most observers. Not for want of access to the clues that are immediately obvious to Holmes, and still less for want of the cognitive tools available to the detective, but simply because these others lack confidence in the sturdiness and simplicity of reality and also in their own capacities as generic human beings. Sherlock Holmes certainly has access to a broader mental encyclopaedia than any available to most of his contemporaries (his ranges from chemistry to medieval manuscripts, to say nothing of the quite specialized knowledge that allows him, for example, to distinguish among ashes produced by different types of tobacco²⁶), and he makes sure to nourish and exploit it methodically.²⁷ Ultimately, though, he simply makes the most of his faculty for paying attention to details and his ability to relate these to general laws,²⁸ which are no different from the laws everyone calls upon in everyday life, but unwittingly, as it were. 'Elementary, my dear Watson.'²⁹

However, as has often been noted (especially by Kracauer, for whose argument this theme is central), what has to be called the postulate of a reality that can be the object of a homogeneous description in a unified language also possesses an inseparable ideological dimension. In effect, this postulate presupposes a universe in which all relations are calculable, and nothing, in principle, can escape the power of a confirmed expert in the art of calculation: in other words, a universe in which the *world* and *reality* are one and the same. Now, this power can be presented, in the classic detective stories, as a strictly intellectual force, one bearing solely on the imaginary calculus of relations, only to the extent that it is artificially dissociated from another power, one capable of being exercised on relations among bodies themselves, those of objects and those of human beings; certain of the latter, for example, will be constrained, bodily and against their will, to leave the walls of their own homes and enter those of a prison.

Here we find again a dissociation between the figure of the detective as a pure mind doing calculations, and that of the policeman as an agent putting the political power of the state into action. *Ratio* – again in Kracauer's sense – is thus indeed what established the link between the free associative power of thought and the coercive power of the state, or, to put it differently, between inference and violence, which are separated and reconnected as in a Möbius strip. In the detective's case, *ratio* is presented, at least in the narrative segments that present the resolution of the mystery – to borrow once again terminology that Kracauer borrows from Kant – as a 'finality without end', art for art's sake, a gesture that exhausts itself in the manifestation of its own beauty. But for the policeman, and for the state of which he is the

agent, it is also a 'finality without end', in the sense that a policeman's behaviour draws its power to fascinate from the power with which it succeeds in folding reality back on itself and making it persist in its being as though it contained its justification in itself.

The second system of interpretation, rapidly dismissed by the detective but often mentioned by witnesses confronting incomprehensible singularities, is based on the common sense of normality as normality is understood in psychiatric terms.³⁰ It is obviously evoked only when the singularity in question appears in the form of an irregularity in conduct that suddenly alters the behaviour of a person previously deemed normal, an irregularity that (naive) witnesses readily attribute to the onset of mental illness.³¹ Unlike supernatural explanations, interpretations referring to mental illness can be readily integrated into the inferential network of ratio. The reasons Holmes rejects such interpretations must therefore be sought elsewhere. They have to do with the difficulty, in this case, of making the leap from mystery to crime, or from abnormal behaviour to unlawful behaviour. Confronted with a case of insanity, the manhunt breaks off, for want of a criminal. In fact, in a liberal³² perspective, unlawful behaviour can only be qualified as criminal if the guilty party is judged responsible for his or her acts, which is not the case when the perpetrator is mentally ill. But the transgression then also escapes from moral judgement, although to a lesser degree. Here we touch on another dimension of the common sense of normality on which the detective's imagination relies: it is also a moral sense. Ultimately, this moral sense is what grounds the detective's intervention in the conclusive narrative sequences where we see him pass from thought to action, from the (strictly intellectual) resolution of the mystery to the reparation of the disordered reality of which certain singularities were the first signs.

The work of reparation entails not only identification of the guilty party or parties but also their punishment. However, as we shall soon see more clearly, the latter does not necessarily take the form of a legal sanction; indeed, that outcome is rare. The detective's action is situated both on the near side of legality – he often acts before the policeman, the agent of the legal order, has been able to intervene – and on the far side. His acts are based on a moral support structure treated as superior or even transcendent with respect to the legal structure, as attested by his numerous infringements of the legal order in pursuit of his goals. The detective justifies these infringements by referring to moral considerations of which legal forms are only a rough approximation, when they are not in direct contradiction. Nevertheless, his failures to respect the rules to the letter are never

sanctioned by the policeman, who closes his eyes to them, as if for him it were a self-evident truth that the detective's acts remain within the spirit of the rules, no matter where circumstances may take them (and this may be quite far). Morality and policing, although situated on two different levels, thus always go hand-in-hand, entailing mutual support and understanding.

The detective as a man of action

Let us add that these two moments of ratio, the moment of logical reflection that solves the mystery and the moment of moral action that punishes the guilty party, are never separated and are never in contradiction, for that would divert the narrative towards tragedy, that is, towards a world inhabited by insurmountable contradictions capable of taking hold of reality in such a way that it could never be reconciled with itself. They both rely on the fundamental property of reality, which is to be ordered at once in a logical way, so that it falls under the power of inference, and in a moral way, so that it falls under the power of moral judgement and its violent and punitive consequences. This synthesis of logic and morality is based on a sociology that is the source of the powerful social psychology applied infallibly by the detective, a psychology that is the equivalent, in the case of human beings (and to a lesser degree in the case of animals), to the principle of sufficient reason that ensures the constancy of the world of objects and makes their behaviour predictable. For those who belong to the lower servant orders, this psychology can remain fairly superficial, so much so that policemen - considered more or less obtuse by nature – are capable of using it. As we have seen in the classic detective stories, those who belong to the lower orders of the servant class are inhabited by two contradictory forces. On the one hand, there is the force associated with the rules that have been impressed upon these servants – variable to some degree according to their functions – and that have taken the form of habits; and on the other hand, there is the primal force, more or less identical in all of them, that they owe to their plebeian nature and that drives them, as an instinct would, to break the rules. The essential psychological problem thus consists in judging in what state the relation between these two forces is found. This is above all a question of observation, especially regarding physical features and peculiarities. According to the well-known thematics of characterology and biotypology, which were considered essential elements of medical knowledge until the

first half of the twentieth century, moral qualities are more or less translated by biophysical properties in all human beings.³³ What lies within a person is not directly observable – especially intentions, which cannot be reconstituted until an action has been accomplished: in other words, too late, in the case of criminals (and all members of the lower orders are potential criminals). Nevertheless, interiority and intentionality are revealed on the outside by biophysical properties that make it possible, if not to anticipate criminal acts with precision, then at least to avoid being surprised by them.

But of course things are different for the master class, where personalities are necessarily complex, for one thing because masters have not been trained to accomplish a single specific task but rather shaped to reach their goals in situations of uncertainty, and for another because their high levels of self-control allow them to conceal their motives or even their irrepressible impulses. For the masters themselves are not totally exempt from inner perturbations, especially those that arise from attachments.³⁴ Indeed, if they were exempt, they would not be fully human, and thus could not be truly *worthy*.³⁵ In contrast, self-made men provide examples of the unconcealable harshness and brutality that betray their plebeian origins, blocking them from access to worth and making their behaviour fairly predictable.

But the class that poses the most difficult socio-psychological problem and reserves the greatest surprises is unquestionably that of elite servants. The social duplicity of these servants is basically a sort of psychological duplicity which, even when they are moved by the best of intentions, possesses them without their knowledge, as it were, rather in the way the behaviour of the Marranos was represented during the Inquisition. Of 'modest' origins, they hold positions and carry out tasks that not only bring them physically close to the masters but also lead them to stand in for their masters in certain circumstances. In a 'civilized' society, and even in a society contaminated by democratic prejudices, they cannot be constantly controlled by violence or the threat of violence, in the way that masters in tyrannical societies kept control of the high-ranking slaves to whom they entrusted responsible tasks, including financial ones. In the latter case, it is precisely the slave's total dependence on the master - which can even go so far as the slave's execution, in cases of breaches of trust – that distinguishes a slave from a vassal, for the latter is always capable of preferring other loyalties and finding other sources of support (in particular according to kinship): their dependency is what makes slaves so valuable.³⁶ Now, in the case of the elite class of servants, the masters are compelled to trust them, to a greater or lesser degree.

To be sure, this trust is not blind. It is rooted in biographic traits that the servant may exhibit: indications about his family of origin and his schooling, in addition to testimony submitted by previous employers. But these reputational indices are not completely reliable. The elite servant may have maintained a hidden loyalty to a former master, for example, that will prove stronger than the lovalty he owes his current master.³⁷ For, more human than members of the lower servant orders (who are little more than brute beasts), almost as human, in certain respects, as their masters, elite servants have attachments and feelings. Among these must be counted first and foremost the feeling of envy known as ressentiment (which we shall analyse in greater detail in chapter 5), that is, an overestimation of their own shackled capabilities, linked on the one hand to disgust for their subaltern condition, and on the other to the jealous passion they feel towards their masters, which can lead even to hatred for the person who occupies the centre of their lives, like an ancillary form of self-hatred.

Under these conditions, we can appreciate the extent of the faculties and the knowledge that the detective must command. They must allow him to plunge into a single inferential network of propositions that pertain to the behaviour of objects and human beings. This knowledge must in all cases allow him to avoid being misled by secondary causes; he must develop arguments that rely on primary causes, to which only the sciences give him access. In the case of objects, he must look to the natural sciences, which dissipate illusory appearances; in the case of people, he must turn to the human sciences, which allow him to plunge into the depths of human beings, into their minds, intentions, inclinations, attitudes and drives, going beyond what constitutes the very principle of the human power to dissimulate, namely, language. Not that the detective is inattentive to what suspects say, but his most precious faculty is his capacity to perceive not just what utterances express but also what they hide. This is how he reaches the truth, which always belongs to the order of calculation. 38 And this is why one of the principal operations performed by the detective – one designed to disconcert his adversaries – consists in translating the exposition of the facts into different terms, that is, in re-qualifying reality, so as to unveil what the subject was making an effort to keep hidden and which was nevertheless right there, within reach, so obvious (as in the paradigm of 'The Purloined Letter'³⁹) that it became invisible. ⁴⁰ Finally, this is why *analepsis* is one of the most persistent formal structures found in classic detective stories. The first recounting, that of the investigation, is necessarily incomplete, so as to elicit expectations; it is followed by another, that of the crime, which reorganizes the elements that were provided in a fragmentary and

more or less incidental fashion in the first telling. This second recounting 'exposes the genesis and the unfolding of a crime of which up to that point only the effects have been presented' (Vareille 1989: 56–7). It is on this second occasion that the detective displays his knowledge, that is, his ability to *express the whatness of what is*, knowledge that is indeed of the semiotic order, as has often been noted. By re-qualifying insignificant or ridiculous incidents, he confers 'meaning' on them; in other words, he transforms them into 'facts' in such a way as to make the crime unquestionable and thus to constitute it as such.

A confirmed expert in the knowledge of investigations, the detective is indeed a scholar par excellence. But his properly intellectual faculties would be of no use to him if they were not associated with other capacities belonging to the order of decision-making and strategizing, and, in the end, simple good sense, qualities that characterize men of action. The Sherlock Holmes stories are full of figures of learned men who, having only intellectual qualities to their credit, are misled in the worst possible ways. It is the conjunction of these two types of qualities, intellectual and practical, that allows the detective, in contrast, to operate in such a way as to re-establish order in the two inseparable senses of logic and morality. And it is finally on the basis of a common adherence to moral order such as it is (and it cannot be other than what it is) that the unbreakable link is established between the eccentric detective and the good Dr Watson, a former army surgeon and a hyper-normal Englishman who can always be counted on, whether it is a matter of recalling the truisms of ordinary morality or pocketing a revolver so as to hunt down bizarre, deviant, criminal, unionist and/or anarchist types, wherever they may be.⁴¹

Restoring order consists simply in putting reality to rights, restoring its closure, repairing the rifts introduced by the mystery and more generally by everything that delivers reality over to the lateral possibilities offered by the world and thereby opens the way to crime. In the central phase of the narrative, the resolution of the mystery makes use of the singularities that threaten the logical consistency of reality and dissolves them as such. This operation allows the possibility of radical uncertainty to be reduced in favour of the providential banality that makes reality predictable – its criminal dimensions included – and thus governable. In the final phase of the narrative, the detective puts an end to the disturbance of the public order and the moral order alike by nabbing the troublemakers or at least leaving them unable to do harm. This operation of restoring the moral order brings together two types of violence. The first is verbal: confronted with the unveiling of the truth by the detective, who explains how he succeeded in

solving the mystery, the accused party is expected to collapse and admit his or her crimes. The second is physical: the propensity of the accused to bow before the revelation of the truth, especially when the accused is a hardened criminal (that is, someone who has already committed more than one crime, a recidivist, in short), is significantly enhanced by the fact that he or she is knocked down, tied up, threatened by a weapon or otherwise cornered.

The liberties that the detective allows himself to take with respect to the legal order, and without which he would rarely be able to achieve his aims, are authorized by the fact that he embodies a moral order that outranks legality. The fact of embodying the moral order inasmuch as it is also, inseparably, a social order puts the detective in a position symmetrically inverse to that of the criminal or – much the same thing - that of the revolutionary or the anarchist, whose passion is wholly focused on destroying the social order. But this is also why the detective shares a large number of properties with criminals, at least with the rare high-calibre criminals who are the only adversaries truly at his level; a vast culture, superior intelligence, usually an elevated social origin and tireless courage and tenacity. Like the great criminals, the detective has several secret hiding places in London's shadier districts, where he can withdraw to prepare his moves and disguise himself (see, for example, 'Black Peter'). Like the great criminals, he has expertise in handling weapons and in the science of using the most unexpected means for killing or otherwise getting rid of an enemy. This symmetry is reinforced by the numerous traits that reveal the detective's eccentric character, the most notorious in Holmes's case being his addiction to cocaine. 42 Like criminals, the detective experiences, in his flesh, as it were, the fragility of normality. He understands criminals and can penetrate their most secret plans because he is so close to them; between him and them there is something like a sympathetic affinity. But this proximity reinforces the only truly pertinent difference that distinguishes them, namely, the relation, positive in the detective's case and negative in the criminals', that they maintain with reality, inasmuch as reality is the realization of a certain socio-moral order that could consequently be something other than it is here and now. This presupposes an at least tacit recognition of reality's artefactual character.

Scandals and affairs

Let us return to the question raised at the beginning of this chapter. If what the classic crime novel has to tell us concerned only the

maintenance of order, with the unmasking and punishment of a criminal as its culmination, why would it not be just a police story? Why would it need to distribute the role of the agent who restores order between two beings, the detective and the policeman? In seeking to answer this question, we may be able to understand better why the crime novel appeared and prospered in the second half of the nineteenth century. We may even see this phenomenon as a mystery in itself; after all, this was hardly the first time that policemen and criminals, agents of order and disturbers of order, had been the focus of comment and even passionate attention, the sort of attention aroused by events and objects situated at the always unstable borderline between the legitimate and the illegitimate, between order and disorder – a borderline tracing the contours of reality more generally.

Without undertaking the genealogical work that would be required to answer the question that has served as our guiding thread, we can place ourselves a century earlier – this time in France under the Old Regime rather than in Great Britain – at a particularly salient moment in legal history in which events of a criminal order coincided with events of a political order, or rather at a moment when transformations were under way that made it possible to retranslate the criminal in the register of the political. This moment may be characterized by what contemporary historiography calls the birth of the public space (Habermas 1984 [1981]; Koselleck 1979 [1959]) as a space for large-scale debates that relate problems arising from daily life to questions concerning the legitimacy of the public order and consequently the legitimacy of power, especially in situations where decisions of iustice come into play. The second half of the eighteenth century thus witnessed the establishment of a social form destined to a great political future that can be called the affair form.⁴³ In France, Voltaire's activity in particular, inspired in large part by the spirit of the English Enlightenment, gave shape to this form on the occasion of various criminal histories that raised questions about the relation between political power and religious power, that is, about the legitimacy of power as such in a state of divine right, especially in the context of the Callas affair⁴⁴ and that of the Chevalier de la Barre (Claverie 1994, 1998).

Each of these affairs started when someone was charged with committing a crime for religious motives. Callas, a bourgeois from Toulouse, was accused of throwing his son out of a window because the son wanted to convert to Catholicism. La Barre, a young man from a good family in Abbeville, was accused of delivering knifeblows to a crucifix mounted on the bridge that crossed the city, in

the company of companions perverted as he was by reading libertine works (the police found a copy of Voltaire's *Philosophical Dictionary* in his home). This blasphemous action, presented as undeniable despite the absence of proofs, was staged locally in such a way as to arouse unanimous indignation. Voltaire's work consisted in drawing that legal story out of its local context by addressing the subject in a series of pamphlets or libelles, short satirical texts in which he questioned the official version of the story – the police version – and proposed a different narrative. 45 Voltaire's version goes back over the investigation in detail in order to show the foolishness of the accusation by a close examination of the facts; at the same time, it reveals the political dimension of the affair. Not only does Voltaire exonerate La Barre, but he turns the accusation around and calls the authorities into question, all the way up to the king, who supported the decision condemning La Barre to death (the condemned man was executed and his body burned along with the *Philosophical Dictionary*). Removed from its local context, the case of the Chevalier de La Barre spread throughout the public sphere and became a national affair that aroused uncertainty as to the nature of the facts and their characterization, an uncertainty around which antagonistic camps were formed; their positions, rising in generality, became detached from the specific case and took on a political aspect.

A century and a half later, with the Drevfus affair, 46 the same form found its most celebrated illustration and went on to become one of the most-used instruments of political critique in the twentieth century. The affair form exercises a powerful critical effect in that it makes it possible to oppose another reality to the reality established through narrative means that belong to the order of political violence; these means may be said to be not only constructed but official since they stem from the power of the state. The other reality, put forward in the critical narrative, is established on the basis of facts and is presented as being the real reality, as it were. One can also lean on this alternative reality to deconstruct the legitimacy of the existing political order. The affair, since it is based on the reversal of an accusation and because it is public,47 concentrates in itself enormous reserves of political violence that can be mobilized as a counter-force against the violence of the law, or the threat of violence, to which the state lays claim. 48 It can be shown, moreover, that during the nineteenth century and especially the twentieth, it was in large part by way of affairs during which the veracity of the facts evoked, and especially their characterization in legal terms, were the objects of public debate that the normative framework of western societies was modified,

leading in the long run to important changes in laws and often to a profound transformation of the categorial systems, the ontologies and more generally the metaphysical underpinnings on which the instruments that give reality its robustness and its contours rely.⁴⁹ For examples from recent years, we need only think of the changes that have come about in laws governing abortion, 50 homosexuality or even, in very different realms, finance and labour. Similarly, it can be shown that in our day it is through affairs that the normative framework in which the question of euthanasia is approached is slowly being modified.⁵¹ The affair form maintains complex relations with another, older form, that of scandal.⁵² A scandal breaks out when behaviours apt to be judged transgressive are denounced through a public speech act that, before the development of a mediatized public space, might have been a space of shared knowledge structured by institutions. The person who makes the scandal public does more than transmit a rumour since he or she assumes the risks of an accusation that entails a call for sanctions and thus constitutes an act of violence always capable of turning against the accuser. The unveiling of a scandal, like the unveiling of a conspiracy (as we saw in the preceding chapter), presupposes reference to two spaces, the one in which actions kept secret take place, and the official space in which these actions are characterized, judged and potentially punished. The unveiling of a 'dissimulation' thus constitutes a necessary moment in the process of accusation (Thompson 2000). But for there to be a scandal, the act in question also needs to have been carried out by an actor belonging to an elite group, that is, to the ruling class.⁵³ In fact, transgressive acts committed by members of the lower classes have no occasion to provoke scandals because it is in the nature, as it were, of such people to violate the rules that the state, or any other authority, wants to see respected. In contrast, a transgressive act risks provoking a scandal when it is committed by someone who embodies the reigning social or political order in his or her very person. Unlike the affair form, the scandal form does not include a stage in which the accusation is turned back on the accuser. Thus in a scandal, indignation can take a unanimous turn without inciting opposing political camps to form around an uncertainty. In other words, the member of the elite who is accused of a transgressive act is the hero of a 'mere' scandal – if one can put it that way – and not of an affair, as long as no one goes to the trouble of seeking to defend the person's cause or, rather, as long as no one seeks to turn the accusation into a political cause. The fact remains that, with the appearance and development of the public space, every scandal touching a member of the elite or a

person in the spotlight runs the risk of having an affair grafted onto it, marked by the introduction of some uncertainty, through a return of the accusation onto the accuser, and through a challenge to the judicial institution or to the legal system itself and consequently, to the existing political order.

How can scandal be avoided?

Let us return to the detective and what distinguishes him from the policeman. In the classic detective novels, and especially in the stories invented by Doyle, the detective works in a private capacity. Unlike policemen, detectives are not agents of the state. Although the point is rarely mentioned explicitly, it goes without saving that Doyle's detective is compensated by his clients and that he therefore lives on the income generated by his activities. As for his clients, they belong for the most part to English and even Continental high society. Not only are they very wealthy, they also hold high-ranking positions either in the state apparatus – in diplomacy or high public office, for example - or in education, the arts or business. Sherlock Holmes is the detective of the worthy. Now, these worthy sorts call on him when they face problematic – actually or potentially criminal – situations that they have not managed to resolve on their own, with only their own powers and in the strict domestic intimacy that guarantees them complete privacy. In such situations, in so far as possible, they want to avoid getting the police involved.⁵⁴

In fact, the police, a state agency governed by the rule of law, responsible for maintaining public order and respect for legality, can intervene more or less discreetly only during an inquiry. And even at that stage, the curiosity of the press, which is always very difficult to restrain in a country where the government bases its legitimacy on liberal ideals, constantly risks serving up to the public, that is, not only to peers but to subalterns, elements capable of compromising the masters and tarnishing their record of honour and moral impeccability, thus making it harder for them to maintain their worth and the legitimacy of their privileges in a political society that wants to see its own framework as democratic (and not, for example, as based on divine law). In addition, the normal outcome of an inquiry is to proceed to trial, or at least to a legal judgement – even if only a dismissal of the case – that has a public character. No matter how the police investigation comes out, the mere fact that it has taken place constitutes a sanction that affects the reputation of the masters

who have been implicated, rightly or wrongly, whether their alleged involvement is intimate or remote, in the case in question; as soon as their names are cited in a public way, the masters are brought into proximity with scandal.

Sherlock Holmes's primary role thus entails untangling the problematic and dangerous situations faced by members of the master class. He acts as discreetly as possible while keeping the police out of the picture and discouraging journalistic indiscretion⁵⁵; the point is to prevent a scandal from breaking out, for a scandal can always escalate into an 'affair' and thus imperil not only the political order but also the robustness of reality and of the categorial and hierarchical differences that constitute its framework. This is why the detective cannot be simply an auxiliary of the police, an expert to whom police authorities would appeal when they are unable to clear up a mystery; this is why he has to get his hands dirty, as it were, and solve the problem he faces, not just intellectually but in practice. It is as a private person that Sherlock Holmes penetrates the private life of his clients. In this he is quite comparable to two essential figures in nineteenth-century bourgeois life, the doctor and the lawyer, to whom clients can turn because they have confidence in their discretion. Like a doctor or a lawyer, Sherlock Holmes, an honourable private detective (unlike his real-life counterparts, whose activities are often deemed sordid by their contemporaries), thus fills the gap that is interposed, in liberal society, between public space and private space. Holmes works in private to take care of private affairs that, without his intervention, would risk shifting into public view.⁵⁶

But there is another factor that makes the detective's intervention socially necessary: the cases in which he is called to intervene are simply too complex for the crude minds of policemen, mere agents of the state, and even more so for the rudimentary instruments available to the police, who rely on legal means. These means are perfectly adequate when the defendants belong to the servant class; indeed, Holmes does not hesitate to turn suspects from the servant class who have played minor roles in his own cases over to the police. Legal means are suitable when it is a matter of catching and punishing citizens who are subject to strict and simple rules, that is, members of the lower classes, whose transgressions are by definition both simple and easy to characterize. However, those means are no longer adequate when it is a matter of understanding and judging the motives, the actions, and in some cases the transgressions – at least the seeming transgressions - of elite subjects who, because they have to achieve complex objectives in an unstable context, cannot be obliged to

observe strict rules that would limit their capacity for action, for this would be prejudicial to the common good of the nation. This holds particularly true for the members of the dominant class whose activities touch directly on the workings of the state: highly placed officials and especially diplomats, whose geopolitical scope for intervention is changeable and relatively unpredictable because every action depends on the reaction of other states to the previous action. In addition, most of the operations that affect the state directly, whether they involve internal security (that is, the maintenance of order within the state's territorial limits) or external security (that is, power relations among sovereign entities), are carried out in secret, so any public exposure – whether from the police, the judiciary, or the press – of mysteries in which these state-level elites may be embroiled would harm the national interest.

To these motives, which are directly derived from the social role imparted to the elites, we must add more specifically psychological and moral reasons linked to the personalities of those who are called to play dominant roles in society. Unlike members of the lower classes, these members of elites are psychically complex beings whose lives are complicated because they exercise responsibilities in various domains. Their loyalties – with respect to kinship, to the state, to their contractual obligations, and so on – are multiple and often difficult to reconcile or to prioritize. Thus they often find themselves confronting moral dilemmas, situations in which different moral requirements are in conflict. These dilemmas arise in particular at the intersection between their affective lives and their public lives. Although they possess a high degree of self-control, the masters are nevertheless not immune to weaknesses stemming most often from their attachment to a person who is unworthy of their trust. These attachments may be familial – a son, sometimes illegitimate,⁵⁷ or a spouse, but one chosen without discernment because she is of foreign origin, and so on - or, worse, they may involve a member of the elite servant class, most often a woman. Governesses, who are young, attractive, educated, often from honourable but ruined families, lacking in protection and therefore touching, pose a constant threat in this regard.⁵⁸ More generally, as one might expect, women are a frequent source of trouble, especially, as we have seen, when they are not English. In short, masters, too, can sometimes make mistakes. Nevertheless, their mistakes, or rather their weaknesses, most often remain excusable (something that a mere policeman might not understand), at least after a close look at the circumstances in which they were manifested. Even when a master has broken a rule, taken at face value, he has

done so only under the pressure of unfortunate circumstances and often to avoid an even greater evil. The remove at which he has placed himself with respect to the rule thus does not constitute a transgression properly speaking since it was accomplished according to the moral logic of the lesser evil, and this logic presupposes such a high degree of adherence to the rule – on the order of identification – that it becomes possible to ignore the letter of the law, the better to respect its spirit.

Moreover, it is by acting in the same moral register that the detective achieves his aims. He too must sometimes step outside strict legal limits in order to serve justice and repair the fragile fabric of reality so that order will be restored. He carries a weapon and does not hesitate to use it to threaten those who try to oppose him. He burns compromising papers so the police will not be able to seize them. He lets people who have just committed murder get away, when they were in the right or in situations of legitimate self-defence. At bottom, he is willing to use any means, including the most illegal ones, to reach his goals – but these are always morally superior goals.

The detective, whose moral sense is high, is not unaware of the close link between the registers of morality and punishment. When he keeps highly placed persons who are nevertheless more or less guilty out of the hands of the police and exempt from legal sanctions, these persons do not get away without having to make amends. Their just punishments are graduated and diversified according to their degree of guilt and their social status. Members of the lower classes are subject to an immanent justice that cuts them off from the world of the living, or they are turned over to the police, and we hear no more about them. Masters experience moral suffering, which is redemptive in itself, and they withdraw from public life to reflect and expiate their excesses in the silence of their vast estates. As for persons belonging to the intermediate classes, elite servants or more or less illegitimate members of masters' families, they may get another chance, by being sent off to the colonial wars, for example, to be killed on the battlefield.59

Class society and state of law

What do these stories tell us? In what respects are they bound to the historical period – the late nineteenth century and the first third of the twentieth – in which they originated? Why have they fascinated several generations of readers, and why do they still attract readers

today, as attested by their regular republication in paperback? The argument I shall develop, in conclusion, is that the principal object of these stories and the fascination they elicit lies in the way they dramatize the state of law and its contradictions.

A first element, stressed by Carlo Ginzburg towards the end of 'Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm' (1989 [1979]), connects the development of what he calls the paradigm of clues with the new problems encountered by authorities in their efforts to control societies in which the increase in geographic mobility, the formation of vast urban concentrations and also the development of the class struggle present a constant threat to the authority of the state and ro the stability of the social order. ⁶⁰ The invention of methods that made it possible to identify criminals, especially repeat offenders, on the basis of physical indications that could not be easily falsified – the identikit images perfected by Bertillon or the fingerprinting techniques developed by Galton – thus constituted a response to the 'control gap' resulting from the decrease in local forms of dependency and control. ⁶¹

But this technical argument can also be extended to the political level. The period in question was marked both by an increase in the state's ambition to control the populations residing on the territory where it exercised its power, that is, its power over what in the first half of the nineteenth century was beginning to be called society, as a grouping largely identified with the boundaries of the nation-state, and by the development of approaches to governance inspired to varying degrees by the liberal tradition. These approaches found support – as Michel Foucault showed (2007)⁶² – in new administrative techniques for totalization through the use of statistics or accounting, and in techniques for identifying individuals - i.e., citizens – through the use of identity papers (Noiriel 2007) or through the use of physical indications that drew Ginzburg's attention (1989) [1979]). All these techniques were intended to address the problem of managing formally free individuals from a distance, either by making their aggregate behaviour globally calculable and predictable, or by making them individually controllable, that is (to use an anachronistic term), by ensuring their traceability.⁶³

Here we can take up the opposition developed by Michael Mann between absolutist and constitutional states (Mann 1984), or what Mann refers to in other texts as the 'despotic power' of states and their 'infrastructural power'. In the case of despotism, the elite of a state, concentrated around a sovereign, holds virtually unlimited power over the subjects. But this power can be fully exercised only in

proximity. Anyone who succeeds in eluding the gaze of the elite and its police (evading the 'red queen,' as Mann puts it) is hard to catch. There are ways to escape this total power (for example, by hiding in remote mountains or other hard-to-reach places). Conversely, in the case of the infrastructural power that characterizes 'capitalist democracies', according to Mann (but that may also be said to characterize any mode of governance that is liberal in inspiration), state power is controlled and limited by law, but at the same time it tends to infiltrate all spheres of social life, so that it becomes very difficult for a citizen to go unnoticed and escape state control. This infrastructural power has got progressively stronger since the late nineteenth century, especially under the pressure of social demands propelled by workers' movements and by demands for a less inegalitarian society; it has culminated in the 'providential' or welfare state.⁶⁴

The passage from the despotic power of the absolutist state to the forms of infrastructural power characteristic of the liberal state led to the suppression of statutory privileges, especially in matters of justice. Before the law, citizens found themselves formally equal. But this also meant that they found themselves all equally *suspect*, at least in principle, in the eyes of the state and its police. Under the combined effects of geographic mobility and urbanization on the one hand and political equality on the other, everyone could experience his or her own 'impotence' by being plunged into a 'serial totality' in which all the 'objective realities' and all the 'totalizing schemata' that could be mobilized to give meaning to reality were in themselves and 'for everyone . . . the Other' according to an 'infinite seriality' whose 'practico-inert unity' is an 'index of separation' (Sartre 1976 [1960]: 294). Everyone could then consider all those with whom he or she entered into interactions 'from a distance', that is, 'when the information was so poor that it was impossible to know who was coming'; potential interlocutors would thus consider such persons not in terms of 'reciprocity' (even negative) but in terms of 'alterity': 'between man and anti-man, they chose the Other, the no, the anti-human' (ibid.: 298).

The classic detective stories were the first to exploit this structure of serial alterity. It finds its most striking form, taking on the grandeur of myth, in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. This short novel is the paradigm of countless narrative constructions in which the character who appears most harmless of all, the one who is morally respectable par excellence and thus least open to suspicion, turns out to be also the most amoral and the most criminal. Like Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, or like Joseph Jastrow's duck/rabbit, a paradigm

of post-Wittgensteinian philosophy, this figure is at once, not only according to the perspective from which it is considered but also in reality – in itself – the charming old lady *and* the poisoner, the austere clergyman *and* the unscrupulous swindler, the responsible young lawyer *and* the serial killer, and so on.

But even if such identitary dualities are realized, in the classic detective stories, in their negative and troubling form, and are thus treated as exceptional or pathological cases, they are no less characteristic of modern liberal societies, as Malcolm Bull has shown (1999); these societies are profoundly ambiguous in the sense that the identity of persons is defined with reference to contradictory processes. On the one hand, we find processes that assign persons a defined position within structures of domination, among sexes, races, nations, orders, and – above all, with the triumph of capitalism – social classes; on the other hand, we find processes of emancipation that offer these same persons the ideal of formal equality on a purely legal basis. But equality requires that these persons entertain no hope of modifying the position that is assigned to them in hierarchical structures. Viewed by those they oppress as arbitrary, these structures nevertheless disallow any attempt to achieve what the oppressed may see as belonging to the order of simple justice, either by their own strength or by multiplying the minimum strength of each person, taken individually, through solidarity and association according to dividing lines that are themselves determined by the structures of domination against which they would rebel. Now, the benefits won by this sacrifice, which presupposes renunciation of all forms of violence, be it individual or collective, physical or symbolic, to the benefit of the dominion exercised by the state of law (the only purveyor of legitimate violence, according to Max Weber's celebrated definition), are ambiguous at best.

The advantages of democracy are not entirely illusory or fictional; if they were, once their complete ineffectiveness had been experienced, one could refuse to consent to them. They do offer some degree of protection, if not against all forms of personal dependency, then at least against their most unbearable and most tyrannical manifestations. ⁶⁵ But the advantages turn out to be profoundly incapable, on their own, of modifying the structures of domination on which individual rights are superimposed, when they do not simply reinforce those structures. The advantages are part and parcel of a fragmentation that makes each individual a defenceless being, always at risk of being delivered up to the others, inasmuch as these others are the repositories of the powers that underlie the law and

are thereby hidden, even from the eyes of the state and its policing instruments. Now, the power of these instruments is experienced in relations of absolute alterity, according to the logic of serial processes. Identitary duplicity, which the classic crime novels exploit and which constitutes an essential mainspring for the construction of the mysteries whose solutions these works dramatize, owes its capacity to captivate readers and keep them breathless, generation after generation, to the fact that it constitutes a fundamental dimension of the identity of virtually all beings in modern societies (Bauman 1993) dominated by nation-states founded on liberal forms of justification. The crime novel discloses a central property of these societies, which is that they are simultaneously *societies of recognition* and *societies of scorn* (Honneth 2007).

In pre-modern communities, and especially in partially autonomous and often isolated peasant communities, actors could experiment with a form of freedom, but primarily as members of the community in its relations with external powers; they paid the price not only of renouncing deviant individual behaviour, which would be easily singled out as guilty extravagance, but also of rejecting all identitary multiplicity, which would be immediately condemned as moral duplicity (Claverie and Lamaison 1982). Conversely, modern liberal societies bring individuals closer together through ambivalent constructions, if only because individuals are at once and in the same respects emancipated and dominated; thus their identities have a contradictory character. By this token, individuals always have something to hide, even if the unavowable dimensions of their identities are modified more or less according to the social situations in which they intervene.⁶⁶

Conservative detective stories and critical crime novels

Let us note that this reversal of identifying features already constitutes in itself one of the principal mechanisms of the affair form and that it is probably, at least in part, the basis for the success of Voltaire's pamphlets, which were eagerly sought and devoured by readers just as crime novels are today. Thus, to go back to the La Barre example, beneath the stereotyped image of the corrupt libertine pilloried by the authorities, Voltaire presents the figure of a sincere, naive young man, at once thoughtful and frivolous as young men that age are: in short, authentic. Using the public space as a place for debates and critiques, these pamphlets call into question the purported unanimity of the Old

Regime by unveiling it not as the organic unity it claimed to be but as an artificial unity engendered by fear and by force, a pure product of tyranny. Considered from this standpoint, Voltaire, a private person actually conducting an original counter-investigation that is attentive to the slightest details, to the facts gathered through the intermediary of numerous perceptive, free-thinking correspondents, is indeed the prototype of the detective. But he is a critical detective.

If the classic detective stories had taken their inspiration from Voltaire's example, they would have gone in a quite different direction, a critical direction, rather like the counter-narratives that appeared in American crime fiction in the 1930s and 1940s and, in France, in the years following the events of May 1968.⁶⁷ In these counter-narratives, which have proliferated in France in recent decades, 68 the narrative framework is always developed on the basis of opposition between a private detective and the state police, but the place occupied by the principal motifs and the value conferred on them are reversed, according to a logic of structural transformations repeatedly brought to light in the case of myths. Private detectives no longer simply combat crime, in at least tacit harmony with the police; they are also, and even especially, pitted against policemen themselves, corrupt agents of an equally corrupt administration that is defending a society presented as 'rotten'. Voltaire could adopt this critical approach spontaneously, as it were, because he was constructing his narrative so as to call into question an order, that of the Old Regime, which was inseparably social - a society of orders - and political – an absolutist power. But the critical narrative path whose possibility Voltaire opened up was almost never taken, in the realm of crime fiction, at least during the century and a half that followed his interventions; moreover, Voltaire's aim was not so much to influence literature as to change the political and legal realities of his time.

The classic detective story developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in a different direction, not critical but conservative. It did not aim to unearth weak spots in a reality that presented itself as robust; it did not attempt to unveil that reality as an artefact or, if I may risk a sociological neologism, as a *constructed* reality, by exploiting the gap between unofficial truths and official lies. Rather, the specific problem this fiction took on was the anxiety aroused by a fragile reality threatened by a continual upsurge of mysteries, that is, situations in which the states of things no longer appeared to be in harmony with the symbolic forms officially associated with them, forms that ordinarily served to characterize those states, and in which, as a result, the course of events could take an

unpredictable turn and spin out of control. Moreover, the vulnerability of the social world was multiplied by the transparency conferred on it, in the national and sometimes even the international context, by the conjunction between the development of public space, marked by the rise in power of the mass-market press, and the constraints of a liberally oriented political order that allowed itself, at least officially, only legal means for action, and this fact itself presupposed a requirement of publicity. What could legitimately be expected of reality thus found itself confronted by the risk of weakness and scandal, and, with the formation of affairs, by uncertainty about what was *really* the case, uncertainty aroused by the multiplication of different versions of series of events whose interpretations became powerless to contain the space of facts.

The classic detective stories exploited this new state of the social and political order in two different ways. On the one hand, they dramatized the uncertainty included in this order by conferring on it a stylized, fictional form that aroused anxieties in everyone, while at the same time neutralizing those feelings by virtue of its exaggerated, larger-than-life representations. On the other hand, they demonstrated the possibility of quelling these uncertainties and restoring order. Reality, briefly shaken, found itself reinforced, more robust than it might have appeared at first. The classic detective stories excited and then appeased the friends of order. Reading matter reserved for moments of solitude at bedtime, these stories kept awareness alert the better to lull it to sleep a moment later.

Above all, however, the detective, through his superhuman wisdom and courage, showed that order could be maintained despite the weakness of the state, that is, despite the limits that the state of law imposed on the action of its agencies: its policemen and its judges, in this instance. The state's weakness has to do with the fact that its very legitimacy is based on the rule of law: it is chained to legality, to the requirements of legality in the treatment of defendants who are also, unfortunately, at least in most cases, citizens to whom one cannot do just anything, after all. Now, this equality of treatment is not adjusted to reality as it appears in a class society. The best-trained policeman with the best of intentions cannot simply use the mental instruments he has acquired in order to deal with routine, ordinary crimes – crimes carried out by, or inflicted on, the lower classes – to penetrate the subtleties of elite crimes, with their mysteries, their secrets and their moral dilemmas. He is even less equipped to prevent or put a stop to the serious disruptions to public order that elite criminals can bring about even in the absence of an intent to harm, with the means

that befit ordinary disorder, that is, using only the means authorized by law.

The contradiction that the classic detective stories dramatize, that they simultaneously reveal and conceal, is thus none other than the contradiction that the state of law encounters when it is superimposed on a class society. The dissociation between detectives and policemen attests to this contradiction by making it obvious that the state cannot fully accomplish the objective that justifies its existence – preserving public order - with only the means that it has the right to use and that it officially allows itself. And this is so even though, behind the self-evidence of the legal order, an implicit reference to a higher order - which can rightly be called a moral order - must be maintained. This higher order is nevertheless not presented as an opposing order reserved to the holders of power alone, as would be the case if it surreptitiously and in secret, or in the name of the Reason of state, contested or relativized the value of the public rules, the respect for which underlies the legal order. This higher order, made manifest when social relations among citizens are spontaneously adjusted to the hierarchical structures of society, is on the contrary the order that the legal order seeks to attain but fails to achieve completely, given the crude means at its disposal. When this order is threatened, it is precisely by stepping outside the rules that one can remain as close as possible to the spirit of the rules, and thereby bring their power to fruition. Thus we might go so far as to consider that the principal hero of the stories invented by Arthur Conan Doyle may not be Sherlock Holmes but rather his older brother Mycroft. Regarding this mysterious character (he appears only in 'The Greek Interpreter', 'The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans', 'The Final Problem' and 'The Empty House'), who is said never to leave the Diogenes Club, of which he is the founding member, and who is one of the few people in the world whom Sherlock Holmes says he admires and considers superior to himself, is it not hinted that he may be a secret adviser to the government and perhaps the head of its secret service? Sherlock Holmes would then be only the visible, though discreet, double of an invisible embodiment of sovereign power, testing himself against material reality.69

Properly speaking, then, the figure of the detective is sovereign in itself because the detective has been given the ability to substitute for the state in order to achieve what the liberal state, in a democratic-capitalist society, cannot accomplish without bringing to light the contradiction that inhabits it, or at least what it cannot do all the time, not officially, not without danger of arousing criticism,

opposition and rebellion – namely, in one and the same move, carry out the legal actions that belong to sovereignty and, by a sovereign act, exempt itself from them (Agamben 2005). The detective is the state in a state of ordinary exception.

The French source of crime novels

Émile Gaboriau, whose works fit chronologically between those of Edgar Allan Poe and Arthur Conan Doyle, is usually considered one of the creators of crime fiction, alongside the two English-language authors. This world-conquering genre thus appears to be rooted in two different traditions, the first Anglo-Saxon and the second French. The distinctive feature that served as our entry point to the Sherlock Holmes stories (and that was already present in Poe, as we have seen), namely, the disjunction between detectives and policemen, is absent from Gaboriau's novels: the protagonist of these French stories is simply a policeman, an ordinary cop. And while Anglo-Saxon crime novels maintained the distinction between detectives and policemen at the core of their narrative structure for quite a long time, their French equivalents, as we shall see, have tended to keep the focus on policemen alone.

Still, I shall try to show that, in the French version of the genre, the novelistic movement is not confined to exploiting the trope of transgression, investigation and the return to order, as would be the case if the action were situated in a mono-dimensional framework, or one structured solely by the opposition between crime and punishment, or between good and evil. It also draws its seductive power and part of its driving force from a different sort of doubling, which can be characterized in shorthand fashion as a *split personality*. The disjunction is not distributed between different bodies, as in the detective/policeman split. Rather, it is inscribed in the person of the policeman himself, whose identity, practices and moral dispositions turn out to be divided, often in a quite conflictual way, between the properties

conferred on him by his status as a civil servant and his own personal properties, inasmuch as he is a man like any other, an ordinary man, although not just anyone: he is a French male born to French parents, and thus someone with 'roots'.

To illustrate this theme, I shall focus on Georges Simenon's Commissioner Maigret. In the stories featuring Maigret, written between 1931 and 1972,² one can see the fully developed form or prototype of the French-style crime novel, of which the numerous other specimens, both contemporary and posterior (and even, in a certain way, anterior), can thus be treated as transformations.

But before approaching the Maigret case, I propose to summarize some genealogical data concerning the genre, whose origins lie in the socially conscious serial novels of the nineteenth century; their traces are still present in Simenon's crime stories, and no doubt elsewhere. I shall also draw on work pertaining to the history of the French administrative bureaucracy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to show how a relation is established, in the Maigret narratives, between two independent and even heterogeneous agencies whose dynamic composition generates the entity that is taken to be the unsurpassable framework for all action, that is, society. On the one hand, there are milieus or classes whose interpenetration constitutes a sort of social substratum; on the other, at a higher level, there is the Administration, an entity made up of flesh and blood, colleagues, papers, offices (and, for Simenon, woodstoves in winter; Maigret stokes them thoughtfully), an agency in which the substance-less person of the state is embodied. Between the manifestations of these two agencies in the protagonist's body there is constant tension. At once objective and subjective, this tension is constitutive of society's very being; it is subjectivized in the way of being of its members. To a certain extent, it is the principal theme of the Maigret stories, the object hidden beneath the framework of the plot.

From socially conscious serial novels to legal procedurals

Before writing what he himself called *romans judiciaires* (what we might call legal procedurals today), Émile Gaboriau tried his hand at various 'trades' (law clerk, hussar in Africa, head groom), spent some time as a journalist, then became private secretary to the popular writer Paul Féval, who had published a serial novel, *Les mystères de Londres*, under a pseudonym, in 1844. This text, a rewrite rather than a translation of George W. M. Reynolds's *The*

Mysteries of London (1844), had been commissioned by Anténor Joly, director of the periodical L'Époque, who hoped to profit from the enormous enthusiasm generated by Eugène Sue's Les mystères de Paris (published in Le Journal des débats between June 1842 and October 1843). As the series advanced, Sue increasingly blended epic descriptions of the slums with social criticism.³ As Judith Lyon-Caen has shown, he did this partly as a way of exonerating himself from obscenity charges and giving his novel a moral character apt to touch philanthropists, and partly as a way of responding to the abundant mail he received from his readers, especially workers active in socialist circles (Lyon-Caen 2008: 256-62). For his part, Féval privileged the picturesque⁴ and sensational aspects of stories. This magistrate's son, a conservative from a Catholic and royalist background, began his career as a lawyer; his writings inaugurated a depoliticization of the serial novel, from which social criticism – which places a totality, the social order, above victims and oppressors alike while calling that order into question – was banished in favour of compassionate sentimentalism and moral indignation. A shift towards the 'criminal novel' was under way, allowing this genre to prosper in the political context of the Second Empire despite a much more meticulous censorship than the July Monarchy had exercised (serial novels had even been held responsible for the June uprisings in 1848).

Gaboriau's originality with respect to the crime novel genre lay in his shift of focus to a new object; for the indignant pleasure provided by descriptions of sordid, shady, sleazy and licentious figures, Gaboriau substituted the more intellectual and less sexual excitement aroused by building a plot around a mystery and its resolution. The popular novel could thus extend its audience by touching a public that dramatization of debauchery might have driven away, even if it were presented under the cover of outraged moralism. To be sure, a crime is still at the heart of the plot, but stripped of its more horrifying trappings, so that only the mystery that surrounds the intertwined technical and psychological conditions of its accomplishment becomes salient. This displacement was helped by making the focal point a single *murder* rather than a multiplicity of diverse transgressions whose characterization might be open to debate. Moreover, murder was generally viewed as a sufficiently serious act for its criminal essence to go unchallenged, whatever the virtues and vices of its victim might be (unless the crime was political, in which case the story would be oriented towards a different literary genre featuring anarchists or other outliers; we shall consider this other genre later on). By the same token, the transgression need

not be the object of a particularly repugnant description, nor need it affect a particularly appealing person (for example, a pure young girl) in order to attract the reader's attention, so long as the identity of the murderer is kept in the dark as long as possible (by convention, the criminal has to be one of the characters in the narrative). Attention can then be focused on the capture; the reader identifies with the figure of the policeman charged with the inquiry, that is, with a representative of order of whom the reader becomes, as it were, an adjunct. Gaboriau's innovation consists in the fact that every 'utterance' is 'a clue to the mystery since the story has no other purpose' (Dubois 1992: 41).

Gaboriau, whose stories began appearing in 1866 in Le Petit Journal, retained at least three features from the tradition of the socially conscious serial novel. First, the police-procedural aspect of the plots is submerged in unexpected reversals of interminable and complex family stories.⁵ Second, the affairs that form the novels' infrastructure take place among 'simple', ordinary people; this gives the author the opportunity to describe social milieus, in a way that will later be characterized as 'naturalist', in terms of what are thought to be their distinctive, picturesque and at the same time authentic characteristics. The third feature Gaboriau retains is the figure of the policeman. Lecog, his protagonist, is an agent of la Sûreté, the national police: an astute investigator who knows how to take advantage of the recent scientific discoveries in policing, Lecoq is a 'former criminal reconciled with the law'. This dimension of the character is inspired by Eugène-François Vidocg's Mémoires,6 the source of a trope of which many versions exist in nineteenth-century literature and whose most famous incarnations are, of course, the figure of Vautrin⁷ in Balzac's Comédie humaine and that of Javert⁸ in Hugo's Les Misérables. The incarnation in a single character of a reprobate – a criminal hostile to the law – and a police officer – a zealous defender of the law – exercises a powerful effect of relativization that may contain a radical critique of state power; this effect underlies the continuing fascination exercised by the dubious characters modelled on Vidocq. Indeed, these national police inspectors serve the state and maintain order with the same zeal, the same astuteness and above all the same absence of scruples that made them so successful in their criminal careers. They are agents of a state that is thus manifested in the pure dimension of power, blurring the principle of legitimacy in the name of which that power is supposed to be exercised. As for laws, they are treated as means, among others, available to power, and thus as auxiliaries of force. Which

is to say that they are most often evoked without reference to an entity that would be placed above everyone – from simple citizens to representatives of public power – if what is called 'the state of law', as a principle justifying the state's power and its use of force, were taken seriously.

The line of fictional policemen engendered by the traces Vidocq left in the collective memory thus has as its principal characteristic the fact that it is not made up of pure policemen but of hybrid beings, half-criminals and half-policemen. Moreover, this sort of split personality is represented as the very basis for the exploits attributed to these figures. Because they themselves come from the slums, that is, from the lowest classes of society, they are chimeras or monsters (in the sense that they concentrate in themselves the antagonistic properties of order and disorder) who have a social competence that allows them to understand the way the lower classes think and act. Thus they are particularly talented at catching criminals, who, even if they are not from the lower classes, cannot help thinking and acting in a debased fashion, that is, according to the idea that members of respectable society have of the populace. It is because a cop is, at bottom, only a criminal like the others, but a criminal invested with power by the state, that he is particularly well adapted to the task he is expected to perform: essentially, to rid the political regime – which has managed to seize control of the state apparatus, at least temporarily - of actors apt to threaten it, lumped together in the vast and vague category of criminals.

Nevertheless, something of the ancient political and critical dimension of the earliest serial novels published under the July Monarchy is maintained in 'crime novels' through the dramatization of people from the lower classes who, even though they are honourable, are still pursued by the police as if they were criminals. The fact that condemned individuals on the run can prove to be more generous, more authentically moral and thereby more respectable in the ordinary circumstances of life than holders or agents of power reactivates a critique of the Reason of state - the state's overriding interest in self-preservation – that appeared in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, most notably in an abundant literature devoted to Machiavelli (Ariane Boltanski 2008). This critique challenges the supposedly higher morality - higher because it purports to be oriented towards the common good – that the state claims as its own in order to assert its monopoly on violence and to impose a reign of order on the territory, in the name of the rights and duties of ordinary morality, that of simple people 'of good will'.

The two faces of the state: administrative continuity and political versatility

As the foregoing pages suggest, the splitting that has been constitutive of the policeman's persona since the beginning of crime novels in the French tradition inspired by Vidocq, along with the sort of legal relativism that consequently permeates this genre, is undoubtedly related to a political history that in less than a century saw a whole series of different political regimes established and overthrown in the wake of revolutions. Considered in this light, French political and social life as a whole can be construed as a state of civil war. In ordinary times, this war can be said to have been of 'low intensity', but on various occasions, and especially during the June 1848 uprising and the period of the Paris Commune, it led to large-scale massacres. The incipient and sometimes violent civil war can be situated on at least two principal axes. On one side, there was the working class, which was itself divided (it still included a large component of craftsmen [Ansart 1970]); on the other side, there were the dominant classes, also divided along various lines (socialists, moderate republicans, liberals, Bonapartists, Orleanists, legitimists and so on). When the political circumstances became threatening and alliances proved necessary, the latter lines tended to blur, giving way to two opposing camps: one that brought together the more or less republican, secular, and progressive segments of the bourgeoisie, and one that grouped the Catholic and conservative segments of the bourgeoisie around the aristocracy.

In a historical context of this type, the state, understood as a 'moral person', tends to be distributed among various actants that are themselves embodied by persons whose functions, origins, social trajectories and ways of exercising power are, generally speaking, quite diverse. On one side, there are political actants; on the other, administrators. The political actants, connected with parties, exercise a power that may be local (the power of prominent individuals) or national (the power of cabinet officers or legislators). But in both cases the strength they can deploy depends essentially on the size, cohesiveness and robustness of the networks - in part based on kinship, friendship and personal relations – to which they belong, and on which the importance of the connivances from which they benefit and the influence they can exercise depends. In other words, this power always has a personal and reputational character, connected not only with inherited wealth but also with the length of the family pedigree, the extent of family ties, the degree of a person's

respectability, the solidity of his rootedness in a clan and so on; the trust the power-holder can obtain from others is affected by all these factors. This power is thus manifested, par excellence, as the power to recommend or to blackball, to protect or to abandon, to nominate or to exclude; its privileged object is the recruitment of persons aspiring to sought-after positions in the world of economics or politics. But the importance of the power that accrues to the members of each clan depends on local political circumstances, which are variable, and even more on the nature of the regime in place at the national level.

The other figure of the state is that of the administrative bureaucracy: the Administration. The power of the state is largely based on its administrative actions; its masters, who are often temporary, would be disarmed without the resources provided them by the prefectoral corps, the bureau of taxation and the police, not to mention the army. In a political conjuncture in flux, marked by frequent regime changes, responsibility for ensuring the 'continuity of the state' also falls on its administrative bodies; this responsibility consists in maintaining in working order the system of constraints applied to daily life, constraints that are, for ordinary persons, tangible signs that, far away, 'somewhere', there is something like a state. In France during the period in question, the Administration also had, and embraced, the mission of superimposing a uniform infrastructure on the diversity of regions (which retained a number of characteristics of the former provinces [Claverie 1984] and sub-regions (local singularities with their hierarchies, their moral norms and their customs, which were still respected, although tacitly, especially concerning inheritance), and finally on the disparate, often antagonistic social milieus; without this infrastructure, it would have been impossible to claim that the territory of the nation-state constituted a homogeneous space capable of being endowed with a specific identity associated with a 'national character'.9

The members of the Administration thus tended to see themselves, by this token, as the true representatives of the state as such since the persistence of a public power able to maintain itself no matter what regime was in place depended on their activity and their dedication. For the same reasons, they tended to deny that the individuals most engaged in the political conflicts of the moment were capable of representing the state, especially those locally prominent persons whose claim to be serving the common good was constantly belied by the tenacity with which they themselves sought to promote partisan interests. And yet administrators depended entirely on this body of prominent persons, if only to the extent that their members, introduced into political circles,

helped make the laws that led in turn to the decrees and rulings that agents of the Administration were supposed to apply. In addition, access to even modest administrative positions and subsequent career advancement depended on the credit – goodwill, recommendations, protection – granted to members of the Administration by their superiors, and more generally by the political elites. This credit, without which access to public-sector jobs and career advancement were simply impossible (and all the more so as one moved up in the hierarchy) depended in large part on the candidate's presumed political leanings, and these in turn depended in large part, for better or for worse, on the reputation of the candidate's family of origin.

The situation was not altered by the stabilization of a republican regime; it continued to prevail at least through the first half of the twentieth century. This is why movements involving government workers, associations, mutual benefit societies and unions, constituted early in the century, immediately focused their demands on securing administrative independence with respect to the political powers in place. These movements struggled to obtain legal tools capable of guaranteeing that independence, such as statutes, anonymous competitive examinations and a rating system based on competence, professional awareness and respect for rules in doing one's job.

The independence that the Administration demanded with respect to the state as the locus of the political had several implications. The first concerns the tasks that it was expected to accomplish. These were more or less dictated by the government, that is, by the agency that gave the state its political face. But the tasks were administratively valid and executable only if they could be reconsidered and retranslated into an administrative logic. The essential element of this re-appropriation consisted in separating them out so that they could be distributed among a large number of agents linked to one another in functional or hierarchical chains and attached to already existing routines, so as to obscure the relation between the tasks and the political ends. On the part of the agents, the accomplishment of these tasks could then be accompanied by a suspension of judgement – an *epoché*, one might say – as to their ultimate, overall objectives. Still, this epoché was not all-encompassing. Government employees were not forbidden to have opinions concerning the work they were asked to do, as long as they kept their opinions to themselves, or at least refrained from expressing them except on strictly private occasions in contexts where they would have no bearing on the way the fragmented tasks that were part of everyone's work routines were carried out.

What ensued, among members of the Administration, was a pro-

pensity for doubling that allowed them to dissociate the public agent – the one who carried out the fragmented tasks that were expected of him – and the private individual or, as it were, the human being, who, having his personal preferences in matters of politics, morality or religion, could have his own opinions without their impinging on the way he did his work. What mattered above all else was that civil servants should never lose sight of the fact that their own destinies were inseparable from that of the Administration as a whole and that their duty was thus to act in such a way that the organization to which they belonged would be perpetuated. The goal pursued by the Administration was thus above all self-referential in nature. As long as the Administration managed to keep itself in existence, the order it was responsible for defending would be maintained. The principal task of the Administration was to ensure its own permanence.

We should nevertheless be careful not to assume – contrary to what seems to have been the long-held belief of a sociology of government inspired by the Weberian conception of bureaucracy (itself probably an outgrowth of the experience of the Prussian administration) – that the relative self-protectiveness of the French administrative bureaucracy could be defined by its legalism and still less by its formalism. If law indeed constituted a horizon for the Administration – and one cannot easily imagine how it could be otherwise – it remained at the outer edge of its practices and was recalled only in the rare instances of scandals or sanctions. Administrative practices themselves were governed less by explicit rules than by often tacit habits, routines and customs. In the final analysis, the administrative milieu was governed above all by personal relations, the favour of superiors (on whom career advancement, always very slow in any case, depended), rumours, opinions, friendships, fraternal or filial relationships. It was a universe that functioned in large part according to a domestic logic (in the sense in which this term is used in On *Justification* [Boltanski and Thévenot 2006]), and in which relations of patronage played the principal role.¹¹ The world of cops was one big family. Maigret's relations with his adjuncts are paternal in nature. Let us consider, for example, Inspectors Janvier and Lucas in Maigret Takes a Room: 'Janvier belonged to his family, of course, adored his wife and children. Nevertheless, Maigret had the feeling that he was putting his duties as a policeman first' (Simenon 1960 [1951]: 31). 'In Lucas's account Maigret frequently called him "son", although there was hardly ten years' difference in their ages' (ibid.: 169).

But the process of autonomizing administrative functions shifts the line of demarcation between public and private spheres onto the

very person of the agent charged with implementing it, and this line played a crucial role in the constitution of the republican social order. For agents of the Administration were public servants only during working hours; the rest of the time, they were private persons and citizens like everyone else, with political opinions, moral choices, lifestyle preferences, and especially – in a country where political conflicts have had a tendency to be aligned with religious affiliations, ever since the Revolution – convictions and attachments in the realm of religion. We should note, however, that this demarcation may have been a rather loose one, as attested by the numerous affairs addressed by administrative tribunals or the Council of State, agencies charged with attributing responsibility; they had to rule as to whether the being to whom one could attribute a given action was the public servant (in which case the responsibility of the Administration as such was engaged) or the private individual, whose actions, good or bad, concerned that person alone. But to be carried out satisfactorily, the tasks associated with public service sometimes (indeed, perhaps most of the time) required the persons who accomplished them to call not only on professional competencies but also on the properties and qualities they possessed 'as persons'. This was the case for public school teachers, for example, because the borderline between a teacher, who was expected to transmit neutral information on ethical and religious levels (comparable to teaching mathematics or reading) and a tutor, who might transmit moral values and shape their pupils' overall way of being, was a very tenuous one. Indeed, this may well explain why teachers were subject to particularly close supervision and constant conflicts.

This was also the case, from a different standpoint, as we shall see more clearly later on, with the type of intervention expected from the police inspector charged with unravelling a mystery and unmasking a criminal. In fact, in order to succeed, the inspector had to deploy not only specific professional competencies but also personal knowledge of life and of the very diverse individuals with whom he dealt in the course of an investigation, knowledge that basically belonged to the order of intuition. The importance of personal qualities is magnified in the case of a fictional policeman, owing to the simple fact that the character must be invested with a personality apt to make him appealing or at least interesting to the reader. It is not enough for him to be an administrative agent, a public servant; he must also possess a properly human dimension. This human aspect is what allows him to be extracted from the coldness of the administrative machinery - which does not tend to be very seductive, it must be said - and brought closer not only to the lot of ordinary persons but also to

that of criminals themselves, if only to the extent that he has to know them, have a feel for them, be able to put himself in their place, as it were, in order to be able to track them down and lock them up. This requirement of humanity is thus responsible for the fact that, at the heart of the character of the fictional policeman who has become an honourable public servant, we still find traces of the original policeman, the one that popular literature of the nineteenth century forged under the inspiration of the media-friendly and ambiguous figure of Vidocq. The attribution of value to the modest, even lower-class origins of the policeman and to the ultimately fortuitous circumstances that led him to join the force guarantees that, even if he has opted to defend public order, he still remains somehow a man like any other, that is, a potential delinquent.

The commissioner vs. the detective

It is easy to recognize the paradigmatic hero of French-style crime novels in the persona of Commissioner Maigret, once this genre entered what could be called its classical age (to distinguish it both from its earliest embodiments and from its post-1960s modalities, which were partly inspired by American noir novels). But in what respect is Maigret's character exemplary? As I see it, it is not that he is portrayed in a more 'realistic' way than his predecessors were, nor that something like a 'national character' is manifested more strikingly in him (critics have proposed both of these interpretations, among many others). His exemplarity results from the way constraints inherent in the political construction of the nation-state as constituted in France during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were projected onto a stereotypical novelistic figure. To explore this hypothesis, I propose to start by comparing the persona of the commissioner to that of the English detective who preceded him, using these intermediaries to bring contrasting political architectures to light while taking into account, above all, the different relations these architectures maintain with the liberal political order.

From 1860 to 1914, roughly speaking, the Anglo-Saxon and French works we recognize as the earliest crime novels were in a constant dialogic relation entailing both imitation and conflict. Gaboriau knew Poe; Doyle cited Gaboriau and had Sherlock Holmes make scornful remarks about Lecoq; Gaston Leroux obviously knew Doyle's writings; Maurice Leblanc introduced Sherlock Holmes as a character in one of his novels (2010 [1908]); and so on. Doyle's Sherlock

Holmes stories met with immediate success as soon as they were published in French, and French authors began to create characters that were variants of the London detective. These writers borrowed a large number of features, modifying them or reversing them so as to confer markers of national craftmanship on the hero they were launching onto the market, introducing a dimension that was both nationalist and critical. These heroes resemble Holmes in that, although they intervene in intrigues involving the police, they are not themselves policemen; in addition, like Holmes, they have uncommon intellectual capacities. Leroux's Rouletabille deploys methodical logic, and Leblanc's Arsène Lupin displays an exceptional intelligence that makes it easy for him to outwit Sherlock Holmes. But they differ from Holmes through the distance they manifest with respect to the moral and social order. Leroux militated against the death penalty and lived with a concubine, for example; Maurice Leblanc, a radicalsocialist and freethinker, used anarchist figures transfigured by their media-created aura as inspirations for Arsène Lupin.

The same protagonists could lean sometimes towards transgression, sometimes towards the maintenance of social order, depending on the social conjuncture and the circumstances of their own lives, without detracting from the sympathy that heroes have to arouse in the reader, provided that they possessed moral qualities such as courage, boldness, wit, generosity, gallantry and so on, which were markers of their superior character. Let us note, moreover, that this representation already presupposes a sort of legal and moral relativization, a reflection in popular literature of the scepticism proper to a society deeply divided between antagonistic political forces. The popular novel, precisely inasmuch as it is designed to please the greatest possible number of readers, had to bracket overly visible signs of partisan affiliation so as to feature characters whose qualities could be recognized as generically 'French'. These characters helped establish the stereotypical French values (charm, seduction, problem-solving abilities, bravery, cleverness, independent thinking and so on) in opposition to the limited qualities of the Anglo-Saxons, not to mention those of the German enemies, so that characteristics that appeared transgressive at first glance could readily be put at the service of patriotism and even nationalism.

But Maigret is decisively different from these avatars of Sherlock Holmes, first of all by the simple fact that he is (like Lecoq) a professional policeman, dependent on the state, and not an amateur or private detective. Another difference has to do with the type of affairs presented. The Sherlock Holmes stories deal with a wide variety

of cases: swindling, family dramas, espionage, crimes of passion, politically motivated criminal enterprises and so on. Moreover, these affairs are distributed over a continuum that ranges from the most intimate (as when they are centred on an unfortunate love relation) to the most public (as when national security is at stake); they often present a mix of private motives, generally domestic or familial, and public – or, more precisely, political – consequences. As was suggested in the previous chapter, this composite arrangement of private and public figures has to do with the social properties of the protagonists. A considerable number of the Holmes stories deal with high-ranking characters from rich, titled families whose importance has to do both with the loftiness of their origins and milieu and with the eminent role the characters play in the workings of the capitalist cosmos and, as public figures, in political life, the administrative bureaucracy and the state. Holmes and Watson are proud of being defenders of the social order, especially in the face of anarchist threats.

The picture is entirely different in the crimes that occupy Maigret. The mysteries he has to solve are in no way political. They have nothing to do with affairs of state, still less with espionage. They are all confined to the protagonists' private, personal and family lives. Finally, the protagonists most often come from the lower or middle echelons of the bourgeoisie, and even if they belong to the upper bourgeoisie, which is much less common, the affairs in which they are involved are of a strictly private order: a blend of money and passion that in no way implicates the destiny of the collective personified by the State. It is as though the genre of crime fiction had divided into two very different branches, beginning more or less in the period between the two world wars: on one side, there is the crime novel properly speaking, in which a policeman or a detective clears up a murder case that was motivated by private interests; on the other, the spy novel, dramatizing affairs in which the agents and stakes are collective and touch on the nation-state itself. Similarly, Maigret and his colleagues do not display the passion for defending the social order that motivates Holmes and Watson. As policemen, the French protagonists can be said to defend the social order, but without making a fuss about it, as it were. They are simply doing their jobs.

Maigret divided

Does this mean that the actant who is responsible for unravelling criminal plots, distributed between two characters, as we have seen

- that is, a detective and a policeman - in the case of the Anglo-Saxon crime novel, would be all of a piece in French crime fiction? No, but in the French context the division does not give rise to the creation of two separate characters. It arises within a single character, who finds himself doubled, as it were, split into two actants capable of observing and judging each other. This schism is manifested especially in the policeman's capacity to distance himself from his social role, above all in his relations with criminals. The division is not merely psychological; it is inscribed in the policeman's personal history. Thus we have seen that Lecog, modelled on Vidocg, is 'a former criminal reconciled with the law. As for Maigret, born into the lower bourgeoisie (his father was the manager of a castle), as an ordinary man he has properties quite similar to those of most of the protagonists in the affairs whose mysteries he solves. This schism thus divides the actant conducting the investigation into two men, one public and one private (the second one being 'just a man') – within a single character.

The public man is a public servant, an agent of the state, and he is thus the intermediary through which the state intervenes in the stories we are told. But the state is manifested here only as an administrative bureaucracy, never as an abstract principle of sovereignty or even as a public power, still less as a state of law. In the Maigret stories, the question of law is striking by its absence. For example, no mention is ever made of limits placed on police actions to ensure respect for the law, and it is often hard to see how the way a policeman acts as a public servant differs from the way an ordinary man would act. There is even less reference to rights that would belong to the suspects whom the police are investigating. Nor can one identify in the Maigret stories anything like the global social order, associated with an everthreatened moral order, that needs to be zealously defended, an order so visibly present in the Sherlock Holmes stories. This symbolic place in which society and the state are now one and the same, because they are both embodied in a class that is at once socially, politically and economically dominant while also being morally superior and legally impeccable, is an empty or absent place in Maigret's world.

One can detect something like an overall architecture in the Maigret stories, but it is of a very different nature from the one found in the Sherlock Holmes tales, even though it too is based on class divisions. This architecture is built around the distinction – the opposition, really – between *society* and *administration*. Society is composed of a mosaic of socio-professional milieus, each of which occupies a position within a social class structure but cannot be reduced to that position. It exists in its own right, as it were; it has

its own internal hierarchies, its prominent local figures and, above all, the ability to have its own customs recognized and to generate its own norms. These customs and norms are frequently evoked in the stories, and such evocations always take precedence over that of the law; indeed, law is rarely mentioned.

The state's administrative bureaucracy, the material body of a state that knows itself only through this intermediary, supervises the mosaic of milieus, but as much as possible without intervening directly, at least in so far as these socio-professional milieus prove capable of self-management by imposing respect for their internal norms and hierarchies – and provided that the interests the various administrative branches are responsible for defending are not too manifestly challenged, whether these are the interests of the state (taxes, conscription, and so on) or private interests, that is, essentially property. But murder, even when it involves only private persons and private interests, constitutes too important a transgression for the Administration – in this instance, the police – to ignore. The Administration is in itself, finally, a milieu among others, with its hierarchical order, its preferences, its prominent individuals, its rules, and especially its internal norms, which are most often implicit; it is a milieu located outside and above the others since in certain circumstances it has a power over them that has been allocated to it by law.

It is of course a tautology to say that civil servants, and especially those in the police force, are on the side of order, since their professional charge is to maintain public order, that is, to maintain reality as it is – the prevailing hierarchies, property, authority and so on – and, in the private order, to protect moral standards and the physical integrity of individuals. But in the Maigret stories, this adherence to order is neither moralized nor made absolute beyond what is required of inspectors to do their jobs. It is as though the articulation between the social, moral and political orders allowed for the possibility of interplay among these three components, which are not completely blended together. One manifestation of this interplay is the ostensibly apolitical character of Simenon's crime fiction. The police officers do their jobs well, thereby ensuring the defence of the social order, but they do so without associating the maintenance of order with the values attached to it, values that might correspond to political options. Similarly, the question of what political, moral or religious attachments these officers might have is left completely out of the picture. It is indeed their duty to ensure respect for something, but the nature of this 'something' is more or less opaque. One can move up to a more general level and undertake to interpret these texts by

calling that something 'the state', but only by detaching the state from politics. The thing to which Simenon's inspectors demonstrate their loyalty, sometimes at the risk of their lives, ¹³ is the administrative bureaucracy, precisely inasmuch as this entity lies outside the various socio-professional milieus, with their particular norms and interests, where the investigation leads them.

Without plunging into erudite research, one can hypothesize plausibly that Simenon had not read Durkheim. Still, it is hard not to be struck by the similarities between the conception of the state that can be discerned in the Maigret stories and Durkheim's theory of the state. Reviewing the texts Durkheim devoted to the topic, Dominique Linhardt thus shows that, for the founder of French sociology, the state is identified with 'a group of sui generis functionaries' whose role is to 'make up the whole' (Linhardt 2010: 301). This group of civil servants 'presents itself as a secondary group among others, but in a certain respect it stands out, occupying a distinctive place in the social morphology: it is the only group whose function implies an orientation towards the political society formed by the reunion of all the other groups' (ibid.). Public servants – that is, the Administration, in other words, the state – are thus simultaneously part of society and above it, specifically above 'local powers' and 'collective particularisms'. This is why Durkheim (like Maigret) opted for apoliticism on the part of government employees and was particularly hostile towards their unionization. While concrete political life remains imbued, as it were, with local passions, interests, attachments and stakes, civil servants have an obligation to remain apart from political struggles and debates precisely because they are the state, an organ that can be said to be political – or rather metapolitical – in the sense that it transcends fragmentary oppositions and distinctions. This distance and this neutrality have to allow public servants to remain apart from 'society', just as doctors have to keep their distance from their patients' bodies, in order – Durkheim says – to prevent 'the burgeoning of diseases through good hygiene, and, when diseases do emerge' to try 'to cure them' (Linhardt 2010: 304).

Police measures

The Administration, in so far as its contours can be reconstructed on the basis of the Maigret stories, is thus directed by an ideal that bears a strong resemblance to the one that the social sciences advocate in their positivist dimension; this is especially true of sociology,

whose emergence is historically associated, on the one hand, with the formation of the administrative ethos, and, on the other, with the constitution of the crime novel as a literary genre. Alongside the mosaic of socio-professional milieus, which are sources of specific norms, and the hierarchy of social classes, whose factual reality constitutes the social order and whose validity or right to exist are not contested in themselves, two additional agencies are in place. First, the social sciences, capable of acquiring objective knowledge of the other two agencies, that is, capable of studying them from a position of neutrality, or from a laboratory, as it were; second, an agency possessing the authority to intervene if need be in the life of the collectives, namely, the police – no matter what political situation, class or milieu may be involved. Police interventions must ensure respect for the social order, that is, respect for the arrangement in which, alongside the mosaic of socio-professional milieus, there are social classes, political preferences, moral and religious choices, and an entity endowed with permanence and relative independence called the Administration. In each case, the requirement of neutrality relies mainly on a logic of competence. When challenges arise, the social sciences can fall back on the absolutism of science and the police on the absolutism of the state, without much concern for the content of these two equally abstract respondents.

When the authorities deem it necessary, the state, via its administrative bureaucracy and particularly the police, can intervene in the daily lives of the persons who make up the various social milieus through two types of repressive actions. First, by actions aiming at an entire group, whatever its nature and extent (local, professional, religious, ethnic and so on) - in other words, by police measures, when the various actions that it is deemed appropriate to repress are given equal status and attributed to a collective.¹⁴ A police measure is a hybrid arrangement suspended between law and circumstances. Whether it takes the form of a decree, a memorandum, an instruction, a text or the like, it does not claim to have the generality of law and does not rely on a political architecture that would ensure its legitimacy under any and all circumstances. But it does not admit to being arbitrary for all that; rather, it claims to be based on a correct analysis of the circumstances that impose it, that is, of the situation that prevails temporarily and locally. Owing to its simultaneously personal and administrative character, a police measure has to have criteria for delimiting the population at which it is aimed. Those whose properties correspond to the criteria (for example, those who live in a certain district, exercise a particular profession, have a given

religious or ethnic origin) fall under the measure in question (curfew, interdiction of professional practice, obligation to sign in registries, and so on). In the Maigret stories we find interventions that take the form of police measures, but, as we shall see, they do not constitute the essential aspect of the means available to the Commissioner. Here is one example.

In Maigret's Dead Man (1964 [1947]), at the heart of the action that leads to the discovery of the criminals, Simenon puts the organization of a 'round-up'. This round-up is described in detail, and with an obvious effort at realism, in some twenty pages at the centre of the narrative, marking the moment when the investigation shifts from uncertainty towards the deployment of means leading to the solution of the mystery and the punishment of the guilty parties. Now, this round-up takes place in the Marais, a district extending outwards from the rue des Rosiers (Simenon calls it 'the ghetto'). In 1947, when the novel was written, the Marais was the Jewish quarter of Paris, populated at the time mostly by Ashkenazi Jews from central Europe, that is, by refugees. Simenon describes it as a squalid cesspool inhabited by dubious, dangerous, undocumented stateless foreigners hiding under false identities. In the novel in question, the police throw a wide net in an effort to get their hands on some particularly bloodthirsty Czech scoundrels. The round-up is presented as a public safety operation, without any suggestion that the author means to mark a distance between himself and the police behaviours he is describing. Even though the brutish individuals the police manage to snare on this occasion have names that unambiguously reveal their Jewish identity, this 'detail' is never mentioned as such. 15 But the description of the round-up ordered by Maigret and in which he participates shows foreigners trapped in the streets while they try to flee, brutally crammed into police vans and then detained for eventual triage; this depiction cannot help but evoke the real round-ups that the same district had witnessed three or four years before the book was published.

While Maigret does not hesitate to resort to police measures such as round-ups, border checks or lockdowns covering an entire district, for example, he gravitates mainly towards individual interventions. Repressive actions of this second type are not aimed at defined groups constituted as categories but rather at specific individuals who are grasped precisely in what is most particular about them. This is the case each time the police are looking for a criminal, especially when the suspect does not seem to have acted on the orders of some collective (a 'criminal association') or with political motives (the intention of harming the Administration and, by association, the state, for

example) but appears rather to have acted alone from strictly private motives. In relation to individual crimes, police measures are largely useless. It is difficult (although not impossible) to subject the entire population of a city, all the members of a certain profession or the entire set of persons born in a particular foreign country to a curfew just because one of them is suspected of having committed a crime for personal reasons. In the latter case, which corresponds to the convention at work in the classic French crime novels (and we have seen that these excluded political crimes and affairs of state from their purview), police action relies on the know-how of agents capable of capturing an individual criminal, that is, agents endowed with the competence needed to cast a much finer net than the one put into place by police measures.

The investigator's competence

What is the nature of this competence? It cannot be strictly administrative since the workings of an administrative agency depend on the deployment of routines and measures of a more or less general nature, even when they are applied in particular circumstances. It is in effect by adopting an essentially procedural and categorial mode of intervention that the agency can sustain its claim to neutrality; this neutrality is open to challenge when the agency takes repressive action against persons in what is singular about them. Now, this mode of action is inadequate when it comes to identifying and arresting criminals. The inspector, a kind of local police officer who carries out police investigations (practising what is sometimes called 'community policing' today), must thus, unlike an administrator, be capable of giving meaning to a particular constellation of events and of identifying a particular individual from among a multitude. This capacity is not part of administrative competence. It necessarily has an individual character, and it relies on personal competence.

This competence can be of two types. As we have seen with Sherlock Holmes, it can be cognitive in nature. The detective may be able to call upon a cognitive competence that is not available to the policeman; the latter remains wholly confined to his mode as an administrative being, especially with respect to legality. But the detective's competence may be of a different sort, as we see with Commissioner Maigret. This fictional character is constructed in opposition to Sherlock Holmes and his French imitators. Unlike those 'adventurer-detectives', 'high-class' individuals more or less 'without

attachments' (like great intellectuals, according to Karl Mannheim 2006 [1929]), Maigret is a civil servant among countless others, an ordinary person like everyone else. He is not presented as having superior intelligence; he is even somewhat suspicious of intellectual prowess and scientific methods of investigation. Born into the rural lower middle class, to a mother who died when he was guite young, he attended the local elementary school (and the local church, where he was an altar boy), then the lycée, as a boarder, before beginning to study medicine. He had to give up his studies after his father's death; the aunt who had taken him in, a baker, died soon afterwards. It was by chance and by default, not by vocation, that he joined the police force at the age of twenty-two. He held a modest position at first (he was a bicycle agent on street patrol), then began to climb the ladder: he rose to the position of inspector, then commissioner, regional commissioner and, finally, head of the special brigade. ¹⁶ Maigret's best friend (and virtually his only friend) is a doctor, in whose home Maigret and his wife dine once a month. On one occasion, Dr Pardon asks him if he weren't ever tempted to study medicine. Maigret responds,

almost shamefaced ... that that had been his first intention, but that his father's death had made it necessary for him to give up his studies. Wasn't it a strange thing that [doctors] should feel this, after so many years? Their way of being interested in people, their attitude towards people's troubles and failings, was almost the same as his. (Simenon 1972 [1955]: 27)

Like doctors, who played a quite central biopolitical role in the midnineteenth century because, along with notaries and priests, they were the only ones capable of moving back and forth between the psychological, biological and sexual intimacy of individuals and families on the one hand and the generality embodied in the state on the other, didn't policemen, too, have to pry closely into persons, that is, suspects, in defence of public welfare? In both cases, the requirements of health and/or safety tended to attenuate the distinction between the private and public realms, not to mention the fact that policemen, like doctors, were authorized to exercise certain forms of individual or collective violence (in the case of doctors when they were confronted by epidemics, for example¹⁷) since the sufferings they imposed were intended to re-establish the health of individual or political bodies.

It is to the extent that Maigret embodies in paradigmatic fashion the double identity of the French administrator – in other words, to the extent that he is in one respect a disciplined public servant and

in another quite simply an ordinary man (who has his own private views but keeps them to himself) – that he is particularly qualified to carry out investigations on the ground. His excellence has to do with the dexterity with which he manages to put properly human capacities, namely, his socially acquired skills, at the service of his police functions.

In this sense, Maigret anticipates the figure of the sociologist who works for agencies dependent on the state - and is thereby also a public servant – but who does not really come into public view until some thirty years after the Commissioner got his start, that is, not until the 1950s and 1960s. Maigret's capabilities and ways of acting are very similar to the ones expected of sociologists. Like a sociologist (although in the case of sociology, the subjects under investigation are collectives rather than private individuals), Maigret possesses both ordinary social competence and a specific competence that allows him to carry out successful investigations in relative independence, which means that the enthusiasm with which he approaches his task is not constrained by too much concern over the uses that will be made of his work. Moreover, this independence of mind is precisely the quality that, from the standpoint of those who exercise power, allows social science 'experts' to identify society's hidden tendencies and consequently confers usefulness and value on these researchers in the eyes of the 'responsible parties'. Isn't Maigret's motto 'to understand, not to judge' a formula in which one can see the moral version of the famous 'axiological neutrality' that is the first thing taught to sociology students? To be sure, as a policeman, he puts guilty parties, or suspects, behind bars, so he cannot maintain as great a distance from the concrete effects of his acts as an outside expert can. Still, he remains at a sufficient distance to be able to look critically at the legal machinery, the course of justice and the judges, 18 that is, those who make the final decision to condemn or exonerate the defendants. These agents, most often of bourgeois origin and in implicit connivance with other prominent persons, are imbued with class prejudices that lead them to judge without understanding.¹⁹

On the same basis as the objects of sociology, the criminal affairs that fall to Maigret are always situated socially with meticulous care.²⁰ They are depicted in specific local contexts²¹ or socio-professional milieus (and often in both),²² or else in what is called 'the Milieu'; the latter, also locally rooted in Paris (more specifically in the Pigalle district), is treated no differently from the others.²³ Or perhaps it would be better to say that all these social milieus, whatever they may be, are treated the way popular literature usually describes the 'Milieu',

that is, as autonomous microsocieties governed by specific rules. All social milieus are characterized by the fact that they possess their own hierarchies and norms, whether they are located at the bottom or the top of the social scale. Society as a whole is identified with the mosaic formed by these assorted milieus. Their contours delimit the field within which the criminal can be sought. Like a sociologist, or like a socially conscious novelist, Maigret begins by immersing himself in the milieu where the crime was committed. He identifies its hierarchies, habits, customs and implicit norms without ever passing judgement on them. His increasing familiarity with the milieu is what puts him on the murderer's trail. In other words, when his intimate knowledge of the milieu has become sufficiently solid, the milieu essentially recognizes the policeman as one of its own, and spontaneously turns the murderer over to him.

Because Maigret's competence as an investigator is socially acquired, attributable not only to his professional experience in the police force but also and especially to his early apprenticeship – to what he experienced and witnessed in his childhood and youth, everything that formed his own habitus, to use Pierre Bourdieu's term - Maigret is not equally at ease in the various milieus in which he is called upon to intervene. Lumbered with a heavy, slow-moving body, described as possessing characteristics stereotypical of the lower classes (he is taciturn, fond of hearty food, beer and strong drink, generous, courageous) and also some lower-middle-class traits (he likes regularity, simplicity, modest, unpretentious restaurants), Maigret is ill at ease when his investigations lead him into bourgeois milieus. The criminals he prefers because he is on the same footing with them, those who trigger feelings of humanity in him (which do not deter him from having them locked up, for he is first and foremost, after all, a zealous public servant, if often a thoughtful one), are criminals from the lower classes. Simple people like himself, but who haven't been lucky; circumstances have tilted them to the wrong side. Not everyone has the opportunity to become a cop. Maigret's humanity, which is at the root of his character, allows him to understand people, ordinary people - to see who they really are, as unique individuals, that is, as fully human beings like himself, and, consequently, it allows him to identify them, track them down and put them in jail (although often 'reluctantly'24). But his humanity can also lead him to be magnanimous in certain cases: he may refrain from arresting them and let them commit suicide or die in their own way (from alcoholism, for example, as in the case of Jaja, the bar owner in Liberty Bar (Liberty-bar, 1932), when he judges that 'life' has already punished

them enough as it is, so that execution or even simple imprisonment would not be necessary for justice to be done, since, all things considered, these would not add anything to their unhappiness.

The fact of having lived, of being someone ordinary, of knowing what a social milieu is, with its norms, its constraints, its morality and also its forms of solidarity (which, in the case of crime and in confrontations with the police, often takes the form of a 'conspiracy of silence'), is what allows Maigret to penetrate milieus that were previously unknown to him and to interpret what goes on in them. It is because he himself is a socially situated and qualified being that he can be a good sociologist. But the fact of being a civil servant at the same time, that is, the fact that he belongs to a milieu situated at once alongside and above the others, plays roughly the same role in this case as belonging to a university or having a place in a laboratory plays for a professional sociologist. This sort of doubling is what allows Maigret not to be merely a social individual like everyone else. acting out of habit and by virtue of habitus, unthinkingly, as if it went without saying, or as if there were no other possible way of acting, as if one had to behave instinctually, as animals do; instead, he adopts a reflective position towards what it means to belong to a social milieu, his own as well as those of others. This reflectiveness is directed in the first instance towards himself. The split between the wholly administrative civil servant and the fully human ordinary man is at the origin of the numerous 'matters of conscience' that are sprinkled throughout the Maigret stories and that are necessary for the manifestation of the Commissioner's own humanity. But this reflective attitude is also the basis for his ability to understand what is happening in other milieus as different from his own and from one another as languages or patois would be, and, as a result, to do his work to perfection.

Maigret's anthropology

The problem, however, is that, since the diversity of these milieus is by definition unlimited, the investigator would risk getting lost in them if his sociological competence were not undergirded and armed by a solid philosophical anthropology. Maigret knows what it means to be human, and what ultimately incites human beings to act in any and all circumstances. In other words, he knows why humans are all potential criminals, since crime is only the most spectacular manifestation of something that characterizes all human destinies, namely, failure.²⁵ Because he knows that human beings are all at

least potentially criminals, moreover, he can relativize the distance – which civil servants view as immeasurable - between real criminals and virtual criminals, and can thus show humanity or pity towards those who have been led by unfortunate circumstances to fall into crime. This anthropology, which is rooted (most likely unbeknownst to Maigret) in the noblest and most solid western political philosophy inherited in particular from Hobbes, is a pessimistic or negative anthropology. The distinctive feature of human beings – especially men, but also women, in a much less obvious way - is that they let themselves be guided by two kinds of passion: the passion for sex and the passion for money. In the private sphere, which is the one in which Maigret gets involved, as we have seen (although the situation would doubtless be more or less the same if his work led him to intervene in affairs of state), these passions are freely expressed in relations among neighbours, lovers and family members. In this sphere, as is often the case in crime fiction, the desire to acquire money by any means whatsoever – for example, swindling, identity theft, embezzlement of funds, tampering with wills, blackmail - is a powerful motive for criminality. In the Maigret stories, however, the desire for money is almost always associated with, and even subordinated to, the desire for sex. The strength and banality of sexual desire account for economic criminality and lead to blood crimes. Sexual motives - jealousy, adultery, debauchery, lechery and the like - and the associated desire for money thus constitute the driving forces behind most criminal acts: indeed, these are virtually the only motives, because they are what drive human beings to act in general, regardless of social class, place of residence, socio-professional milieu and so on.

The generalized anthropological character of the sexual motive is attested by the fact that no character is deemed innocent a priori with respect to debauchery, regardless of social status or age. This is particularly true for women, whom Maigret always assesses at the first encounter by considering them from the standpoint of a man in whom they would arouse desire, for, according to his anthropology, under the right circumstances every woman, without regard to age or beauty, can excite a man (and vice versa). Simenon's female characters are thus always introduced with comments that indicate their value as sexual objects. Let us take Mme Thouret (the widow of the murder victim), her sister and her daughter, in *Maigret and the Man on the Bench* (1975 [1953]): 'She was about the same age as her husband, but a good deal more heavily built, although she couldn't be called fat. It was her frame that was large, and covered in firm flesh. The gray dress she was wearing, protected by an apron, which

she now mechanically took off, did nothing to soften her appearance' (11). Mme Thouret's sister: 'It was Maigret, his eyes on the two women, who uncovered the [victim's] face. It was the first time he had seen them together in a good light. At first, in the darkened street, he had mistaken them for twins. Now he could see that the sister was three or four years younger, her figure having retained a measure of suppleness, though probably not for long' (15). And Mme Thouret's daughter: 'Monique was not unattractive. She did not look much like her mother, although she was of the same heavy build. This was less marked in her case because her young skin was softer and her body more supple' (20). Examples abound in virtually all the Maigret novels. Here is the portrait of Mademoiselle Clément, the owner of the rented room in question in Maigret Takes a Room (1960) [1951]): 'She was like an enormous baby, with pink skin, indecisive shape, with great blue eyes, very blonde hair, a dress the colour of a lolly' (16). Further on: 'Mademoiselle Clément rushed out to meet him, quite excited, her great breasts shaking inside her dress at every movement like jelly' (36). Mademoiselle Clément again, as seen by one of Maigret's underlings, Inspector Vacher: 'The fat lady's left me everything I need. She got up a while ago to make me some coffee. She was in her nightdress. If I hadn't been on duty, I'd willingly have made a move in that direction' (145-6). Mlle Blanche, a 'dramatic artiste' staying at the boarding house, is 'a pretty girl' (40), 'a lazy little whore who spent the whole day reading novels in bed' (96). When Maigret went to interview her in her room, she 'was in her dressing-gown, as usual, and it was obvious that she wore nothing underneath' (115). Later, she was seen 'making eyes at [an inspector], her dressing-gown more than half open ...' (176). There is also 'a young typist who was brought home every night in a taxi' (96). In the same novel, a cloakroom attendant at a bar is described as 'a plump, once-beautiful woman' (18).

As in contractualist political philosophies, where this pessimistic anthropology serves to establish the necessity of a state and to legitimize the state's existence as an agency of judgement and sanction placed above passion-riven individuals and thereby as the seat of state self-preservation (the Reason of state) as political reason, that is, as reason par excellence, Maigret's political anthropology is what justifies in his own eyes, and above all in the reader's eyes, the violence that he does not fail to deploy as required to do his job as a policeman. But this violence can only be legitimately used to the extent that, even though he too is a man like other men, an ordinary individual, Maigret is nevertheless distinct from other human beings in that he is

a civil servant: in other words, he has a mandate from an institution that holds the monopoly on legitimate physical violence.

Among Maigret's most deeply rooted and, in a way, most troubling characteristics is the fact that he has no personal interest in money, in sex or even in politics. He has simple tastes that his modest salary allows him to satisfy: a small apartment in a lower-class neighbourhood, inexpensive restaurants, sturdy inelegant clothes, holidays in the countryside or with family members, and so on. As for sex, as many commentators have noted, it seems absent from Maigret's life. To be sure, Maigret is married, but almost nothing is said about his wife Louise (an Alsatian from Colmar with a modest background similar to his) except regarding her almost maniacal concern for house-cleaning (like the Germans and the Swiss, Alsatians have a reputation for attaching great importance to cleanliness) and the art with which she prepares delicious little dishes for her husband, investing them with all her love.²⁶ In the order of passions, beyond his passion for work well done, we find only a passion for tobacco, good food, and - though he never lets himself get carried away - drinks enjoyed in random bistros he comes across in his investigations. If the attractions of sex and money drive the actions of men in general, it is through his resistance to these appetites – or perhaps it would be better to speak of their quite decisive repression, since nothing even hints at the possibility of temptation²⁷ – that the embodiment of a civil servant is most fully revealed in Maigret. His abstinence manifests the distinctive feature that sets this character apart: it protects the integrity of a way of judging that is nevertheless rooted in the most ordinary physical humanity (and not, as we have seen, in exceptional cognitive abilities) against the blind forces that might come to corrupt that humanity, forces unleashed by the violence of desires or by the pursuit of personal interests.

The always latent tension between Maigret's two bodies, that of the man and that of the civil servant, constitutes one of the dramatic mainsprings of many of the novels. A device often used to highlight this tension consists in positing the existence of pre-existing ties – apt to be the foundations for personal attachments – between Maigret and actors implicated in a given affair as victims (like Marcellin²⁸ or Ferdinand Duval,²⁹ old acquaintances of Maigret), as suspects (like Léon Florentin, an old school comrade³⁰), or even as investigators (like Inspector Lauer, Maigret's nephew³¹). More generally, the many 'matters of conscience' that agitate Maigret and spur an 'internal debate' are stressed every time his duty as a policeman comes into conflict with his sympathies; or more precisely, every time the admin-

istrative principles of judgement he knows he ought to apply are not in harmony with the judgements he would make if he could use his personal moral sense, which coincides moreover with ordinary morality.³²

It is according to this same logic that Maigret proves indifferent to politics, which is also viewed as a subjective passion and therefore as a corrupting force. As evidence, we can consider the particularly murky impression that arises from the story in which Maigret, summoned by a government official, is led to investigate political milieus, where he finds only corruption, absence of scruples, ambitions, meanness and the like.³³ And it is precisely because he keeps his distance from politics and pursues no objectives other than those assigned to him by his immediate superiors that Maigret's competencies can be placed at the service of any politics at all, whatever the goals pursued; Maigret avoids looking too closely into these goals, as if to maintain a peaceful coexistence between his two avatars.

It is easy to recognize in the modest pleasures that Maigret allows himself - eating, strolling, smoking - the kinds of weaknesses that are readily excused in priests, as if they were deemed necessary for the pursuit of a life devoted wholly to the higher institution that they represent in the world here below, and for the renunciation of the pleasures and passions of ordinary men – specifically the passions for money and sex. Simenon, although quite generous with biographical information about his protagonist, never explains why Maigret has no children. But we may presume that this particularity, which goes along with the absence of sex and a seemingly celibate marriage, accentuates even further the similarity between the status of a policeman – at least as constructed in these novels – and that of a priest. Moreover, must not a priest, destined by the nature of his work (unlike a monk who is released from the cares of the world and can thus attain more exceptional and intense forms of relation with the sacred) – even though he is a priest and however authentic his piety - also be an ordinary man, equally full of humanity, in order to understand the ordinary human beings he deals with, in order to excuse them or at least to punish them only to an appropriate extent and with the goal of reform?

The personal power of the administrative subordinate

Maigret, as a member of the Administration, is a subordinate. His professional life depends on the appreciation of his superiors, who

have virtually total power over the progress of his career. In his professional practice, he is doubly subordinated: by the obedience he owes the hierarchy and by a framework of rules based both on law and on bureaucratic routines that are matters of custom but imposed like rules. As a subordinate, Maigret has a proletarian aspect: he follows instructions and implements measures that are manifestations of a power that does not truly belong to him; he is merely its executor. From another standpoint, though, he has access to considerable power because his activities are directed at other human beings in situations that always have a singular character and whose outcomes are often governed by urgency, so that the pragmatics of action tends to prevail over the semantics of rules. In the descriptions we are given, Maigret's power derives from his force as a man, something inherent in his person: he is calm, solid, taciturn, thoughtful, obstinate, fair-minded and so on. Paradoxically, the masculinity of this force is all the more affirmed in that its possessor has made the sacrifice of sexuality, a sacrifice comparable to that of priests. As with priests, this force is both delegated and personal. It is a paternal force, that of someone who, being no one's father, can appropriate the essence of paternity and act as though he were anyone's father. But, although the description privileges its physical dimension, this force derives first of all from the power of interpretation that Maigret as a man exercises over the rules imposed on him as a subordinate civil servant, that is, as a quasi-proletarian.

Guy Debord defined a proletarian as someone who has no power over the use of his own life and who knows it (1994 [1967]).³⁴ In this sense, the subaltern personnel of the Administration can be compared to a sort of state proletariat. The members of the Paris police force often come from poor rural families or are children of labourers or subaltern employees in small provincial towns (and this was even more often the case in the past under the Third Republic and then the Fourth, as Alexis Spire's work has shown [2005, 2008]). Their situation differs from that of the proletariat in that they have stable employment. But this stability comes at the price of a high degree of dependence on the organization to which, in the strong sense of the term, they belong. The predictable character of their careers and thus of the shape of their lives is almost absolute, and they have almost no way of influencing it. In the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, the working and living conditions of factory workers were quite precarious, but this very precariousness could have as its counterpart a certain boldness in confronting the structures of domination; this is attested, for example, by the degree of turnover and absenteeism and by the

so-called wildcat strikes in France in the mid-1930s. Conversely, the subaltern employees of the Administration are embedded in a very stable environment, as attested by the fact that they managed to get through the Occupation without major disturbances. But the relative assurance that they will always have enough to live on, since they know that they will benefit from a modest retirement income, comes at the price of great docility and constant fear of displeasing their immediate superiors.

Still, in relation to this overall situation, an important difference sets apart subaltern administrative employees whose jobs put them in direct contact with persons who are more or less without any rights or whose rights are at all events inferior to their own. These subaltern employees, who have practically no power over the course of their own lives (since the unfolding of those lives depends largely on the organization within which they work), have access to power that can be quasi-discretionary over the persons who fall into their hands and whom they know only as *cases* to be dealt with. These persons may be immigrants trying to obtain residency papers, as in the examples studied by Alexis Spire (2008), or persons without resources appealing to social service employees. But the uncommon power of employees in the presence of desperate individuals is even more obviously characteristic of the position of policemen during an investigation.

In these various instances, the asymmetry bears first of all on language use and, correlatively, on the possibility of drawing on an ability to interpret. Whether immigrants, welfare clients or suspects are involved, the fate of the persons with whom subaltern employees deal depends largely on the stories those persons are able to tell, stories that concern their past history or their recent actions.³⁵ But these narratives are inserted into dialogic relations that are highly asymmetrical, if only to the extent that the employee confronting these persons is a civil servant with authority (often sworn to uphold the law) who has the monopoly on questioning. These civil servants are in a position both to assess the credibility of the stories they are told and to draw consequences from the stories by associating the case they are handling with an array of instructions and rules that come down to them in the form of memoranda transmitted by the hierarchy. This means that their interpretive power is twofold: they interpret what the person before them says in response to their questions, and they also interpret the instructions, directives and rules they are to apply to the case at hand according to their best judgement: in concrete terms, this means choosing to rely on one or

another of the memoranda at their disposal, memoranda on which the legal character of their activity depends and to which they could refer if for some reason they were to have to justify themselves before the hierarchy.

The consequences of the interpretive power exercised by subalterns lacking administrative power must not be underestimated. The power to interpret in fact contains a very high-level reserve of strength, in that a number of other manifestations of power depend on it to a large extent: in particular, the possibility of direct physical violence, at least under conditions where the exercise of such violence is legitimate, not to mention the indirect violence that consists in recognizing or denying a person's property rights.³⁶ Now, this interpretive power always has a personal aspect (as presupposed, for example, in a legal reference to a judge's 'intimate conviction'). Whether it is a matter of interpreting a suspect's story or the story of someone applying for social services (who is always also a suspect since he or she is suspected of lying in order to benefit from an unwarranted advantage), the interpretation is never contained either in the factual report of the applicant's narrative or in the impersonal statement of the rules pertaining to the case at hand. It can only emanate from a person, precisely because the latter must, on the one hand, turn away from the terms of the story to focus on the intentions behind its telling, and, on the other, turn away from the letter of the law to discern its spirit, in order to figure out the best way to apply it in the particular case - which in practical terms most often amounts to making a selection among a number of vague and mutually contradictory rules.

It follows that the power of interpretation is necessarily located at the point where it is impossible to distinguish between the interpreter considered as an ordinary human being and the interpreter considered as an agent of the Administration, a representative of state power. This lack of distinction is all the greater when the interpretive situation is less caught up in a web of legal requirements or, to put it bluntly, when the person requesting services and/or the suspect is less in a position to invoke his or her individual rights. Maigret himself notes this, with his usual perspicacity:

'Contrary to popular belief', he was fond of saying, 'being arrested can be something of a relief to a suspected person, because, from then on, he does at least know where he stands. He no longer has to ask himself: "Am I under suspicion? Am I being followed? Am I being watched? Is this a trap?" He has been charged. He can now speak in his own defense. And henceforth he will be under the protection of the law. As a prisoner, he has his rights, hallowed rights and nothing will be done

to him which is not strictly in accordance with the rules.' (Maigret and the Headless Corpse [Maigret et le corps sans tête 1967 [1955]: 136)

Maigret in his castle

Innumerable difficulties and complications are bound up with the distinction between the man and the civil servant, a distinction that is constitutive of the situation of an agent of the Administration but that is very hard if not impossible to make in practical terms. As we have seen, these difficulties and complications underlie many of the matters of conscience that are set forth in a sympathetic way in Simenon's crime novels; according to many commentators, these passages account for the psychological interest and unique charm of these stories. But they also allow us to understand the very particular kind of sadism that characterizes Maigret and that is not irrelevant to the exceptional success of the works in which he is the hero. Maigret's discreet, almost casual sadism is distinct from the simple cruelty of the crude, brutal cop precisely because Maigret recognizes that the suspect shares a common humanity, while denying him that membership in practice. For this 'subject' – as Sade puts it in talking about persons considered as objects of erotic pleasure – is only the auxiliary whose presence stimulates the capacities that the policeman calls on in order to hunt down his target and overpower him, as he would an animal, or to ferret him out as he would a collector's item. This sadism is never more evident than when, giving free rein to his properly human qualities, Maigret lingers over the humanity of the persons he is led to pursue, suspect, interrogate, entrap and, finally, imprison, with all the consequences that accrue, including death on the scaffold for some.

Maigret's humanity, which is often manifested in terms of pity, or even esteem and consideration, is the essential quality that characterizes the commissioner during his investigations, as we have seen. It is a quality that emanates from his most intimate being, an inherent quality, in a sense. It is attested by the countless little details sprinkled throughout the novels concerning his habits (even the most trivial ones), his weaknesses, his doubts, his impulsivity, his likes (especially in the gustatory realm) and dislikes. And it is because he himself is a profoundly *human* being, a man like other men, neither better nor worse, that he can understand the human beings he comes across during his investigations. But the faculty of understanding, this inclination to understand these human beings who are like any other but

whom he suspects, pursues, questions, corners and so on, is at the service of his administrative responsibility, that is, of his work as a policeman, which consists precisely in tracking human beings down and unmasking, under the harmless appearance of an ordinary man, what is, finally, everyman, that is, a criminal, actual or potential. And Maigret never carries out his repressive mission as well as when he appears to free himself from the administrative straitjacket and seems to shrug his shoulders at the (inhuman) impersonal, bureaucratic rules, the nitpicking regulations.

But why speak of sadism? To be sure, Maigret inflicts suffering on the human beings who weep in his office, for example, or who collapse after hours of interrogation, and the reader is not spared the description of such suffering; on the contrary. Still, there is never any suggestion that Maigret takes sexual pleasure or even personal pleasure in these physical abuses. One can ask, though, whether Maigret's sadism is not inherent to the doubling that characterizes him. It would then have something like a structural character. Again, there is no indication that Maigret derives pleasure from causing suffering. But it is understood that he enjoys (and the reader with him) the power that he has over himself and others, when he manifests his power in its two seemingly contradictory forms. The impersonal force of the civil servant inflicts innumerable instances of suffering so that the police mission can be carried out. The personal force of the man casts a pitying, even sympathetic gaze on the policeman's victims and also, sometimes, an admiring gaze on the policeman himself who, overcoming his human, all too human, weakness, does not hesitate to resort to a degree of violence towards which he is not drawn as a man. Maigret's enjoyment always comes from within.

This is to say that the effect of sadism is inherent here in the differential between the man's humanity – which enables him to understand human beings as such and to consider the face of the *other*, which the violence of the policeman has laid bare in its fragility – and his loyalty towards the administrative system that he serves with passion. Maigret is never a better policeman than when he reveals his full humanity, since that humanity is what allows him to understand and thus to confound. The ambiguity is particularly apparent in the scenes during which Maigret subjects a suspect to questioning. He knows better than any of his colleagues how to conduct an interrogation, how to ask seemingly innocent questions, sometimes without even knowing why he is raising them. He knows that interrogations must be conducted with caution; he knows that it does no good for a cop to conclude too quickly that he has found the key to the puzzle. But

he also knows, from experience, that no one withstands an intense interrogation stretched out over several hours during which several policemen take it in turns, especially if the questioning is well-timed. And Maigret also knows from experience that it is by revealing his own humanity during these interrogations (for example, by offering the suspect a cigarette, or by dispatching an underling to pick up beer and sandwiches at the bar across the street) that he will get the result he is after, namely, a confession. For no one resists; no one can resist. One only has to wait for 'the "crack", the moment when the person raises the mask' (de Fallois 2003 [1961]: 105). Are not the most intelligent persons, the ones most sure of themselves, the cleverest (and, one would be tempted to add, the most innocent), ultimately the most fragile? The pleasure of the effective civil servant is the counterpart of the humanity of the good fellow who knows how to limit the extent of the suffering that he inflicts. And yet, although inseparable, these tendencies seem to be distributed between different beings. The man feels pity. The civil servant experiences pleasure. This pleasure is the one procured by an asymmetry in interpretive power – as a prelude to physical violence – which is in some sense absolute. It is inherent in Maigret's principal weapon, which is none other than interrogation, as we have seen. He asks questions to which his interlocutors (if we may call them that) cannot fail to respond, even if they try to prevent themselves from doing so by the childish artifice of lying. But at the end of the day, they always end up 'spilling the beans'.

The effect of sadism, which is a manifestation of the split personality that Simenon's stories dramatize, is nowhere more visible than when Maigret is dealing with beings presented as especially weak, for example adolescents, or women. Maigret's humanity is expressed most strikingly in such cases, along with his capacity to feel compassion and especially to show his understanding. Maigret never falls in love with the women he comes across in his work, nor are there even any indications that he desires them, even if certain of them hold his attention more than other 'suspects' do (and there is often something vaguely suspect about this attention). But he tries with more than usual perseverance to understand these women. His effort to comprehend is of course justified by what the author tells us about the irrational and thus incomprehensible character of women in general. But the reader understands, reading between the lines, that Maigret's interpretive inclination towards women is not merely rooted in a naive (and sexist) theory of gender difference. He has an overwhelming desire to understand these women, whom he is going to corner, trap and perhaps incarcerate. And this desire becomes clearer in the

light of a remark about women noted by Henri-Frédéric Amiel in his *Journal*, a self-analysis of more than 20,000 pages in which the professor from Geneva endlessly revisits his desires and his powerlessness to realize them: about women, he says that 'to be understood is to be taken; to be penetrated is to be possessed' (cited in Luc Boltanski 1975b: 108). Such a machinery of desire would be unattainable if the French Administration obeyed a strictly rational logic, that is, the logic of law – as sociologists who have read too much Max Weber (and read badly) believe it does. It is made possible only through the properties evoked earlier of the Administration as an embodiment of the state in human beings who are at once like the others and distinct from them because they are situated above all the rest.

Let us look at an example of the way Maigret treats his victims with humanity. The character – ambiguous, to say the least – of Maigret's profoundly 'human' feelings is especially clear in the descriptions of his relations with a character named Maria in Maigret's Dead Man (1964 [1947]). Maria, a young woman described as exceptionally beautiful and wild, and, to put it bluntly, as a kind of animal, is the leader of a handful of bloodthirsty bandits originally from central Europe. At the moment of her arrest during a round-up on the rue des Rosiers, in the Marais, she was in the process of giving birth to a baby whose father could have been any one of the bandits of whom she was the shared wife. Maigret gets Maria into the Laennec hospital, where she is kept under surveillance for several days before being taken to the police infirmary. But his humanity leads him to send her flowers that another patient had left behind when she was discharged from the hospital. A criminal, Maria is no less a mother. Guided by the same overflowing humanity, Maigret suggests to the (sterile) wife of a café owner who had been killed by a member of the band that she adopt the baby who would otherwise be an orphan since his mother was to be guillotined, as Maigret informs the woman. (Let us note that there is nothing impossible or implausible about this. One example: during the repression carried out in the early 1970s by the Argentinean junta against unionists and members of left-wing parties, many young children of the murdered militants were kidnapped by the police and placed for adoption with childless society women. This phenomenon, denounced by the 'crazy' mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, was massive enough to give rise, thirty years later, to a collective movement in which the kidnapping victims, now adults, demanded that the courts give them back their true identities.) Maria's story, a particularly bleak one, it must be said, brings clearly to light the ordinary sadism that permeates Maigret's adventures.

This tendency grows out of the differential between the acts of violence Maigret carries out as a civil servant and the acts of compassion he accomplishes as a man, although the latter have no consequences whatsoever for the former. For state violence to reveal its sadistic dimension, the humanity of those on whom it is exercised has to be highlighted. If Maria were merely an animal, striking her down would not be a problem. It is because she is described as a beautiful woman, sexually exciting, and also as the mother of a newborn child – and thereby interesting, even touching – that her announced execution can arouse troubled thoughts not only in the policeman's mind, but also, more importantly from a literary standpoint, in the reader's.

The crime novel from the standpoint of the state

The intervention of a detective (in Sherlock Holmes's case) or a policemen (in Maigret's) is triggered by an event that rips apart the seemingly flawless fabric of reality. As the investigation proceeds, it seeks out the origins of this rupture and tries to determine the field (which may prove to be more or less vast) that is affected. In both cases, the investigation results in an unveiling. Beneath reality there is something else that has to be identified because it threatens the very continuation and orderliness of reality. But this general structure, which is constitutive of crime fiction as a genre, unfolds according to very different modalities in the two sets of stories.

In the Sherlock Holmes stories, the disturbances that affect reality have a local and temporary character. Reality is in effect credited with a solid overall tenor, so that what appearances allow us to see generally corresponds quite closely to what reality is actually understood to be. There is no a priori reason to be sceptical about the reality of reality. In normal situations, actors can thus treat their environment as if it exists on a single plane, without positing another world underneath, which reality would be concealing. The tendency to suspicion is not a prerequisite, then, for grasping the social world (and thus for deploying strategies that have some chance of success); on the contrary, it constitutes an almost pathological way of being that prevents people from acting appropriately. In fact, the reality depicted in the Holmes stories is based on a legal order, liberal in inspiration, whose solidity is guaranteed by the competence of a large number of law enforcers exercising their vigilance over networks of contracts that everyone is presumed to respect. This reality thus relies on a postulate of *trust*, that is, on a common adherence to the social

order as it is, so that to manifest a propensity to distrust the reality of reality, or even to voice simple doubts about it, is the best way to lose all credibility, and thereby to be marginalized or excluded from society. Moreover, this is why the detective's intervention is so necessary for society. As soon as something like a mystery, that is, a break in reality, turns up, there is an urgent need to get to the bottom of it, so as to keep the doubt created by a local weakness from proliferating and threatening to challenge adherence to reality as a whole, or, more precisely, to keep it from destroying belief in the validity of the prevailing contracts.

There is one other possibility, however, one that appears obsessionally in English detective fiction: that of the perfect crime. The notion of the perfect crime was introduced only gradually into French crime fiction under the influence of the English masters; it never comes up in the Maigret stories. For Maigret, nothing is perfect, not even crime. The idea of the perfect crime becomes salient, in fact, only in a social and political world whose members are viewed as calculators, so that the overall equilibrium is nothing but the aggregation of a multiplicity of individual calculations. In such a world, good calculators are those who correctly assess their chances of success in terms of the assets they hold, and thus also correctly estimate their competitors' assets and likelihood of success. It is the existence of this natural equilibrium that makes it possible to limit the action of the state, for the state's role is above all to punish or correct the bad calculators, the ones who have overestimated their own possibilities and, having miscalculated the opportunities available to them, have sought to maximize illusory opportunities through crime.³⁷ But since these criminals are, by construction, poor calculators, they fail even in the career of crime, so that they can be identified fairly easily and prevented from doing harm. However, there is always the possibility - developed fantasmatically in our context - that a criminal may also be a good calculator, even sometimes a brilliant one. In such cases, one can speak of a born criminal, someone whose perversity does not stem from efforts to correct an incorrectly evaluated situation but which is in some sense inherent to him. The criminal who is a good calculator is thus the only being capable of disrupting a society based on the equilibrium of individual calculations. And this is why the only adversary capable of defeating him must be a brilliant calculator himself, like the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes.

The problematics of crime is envisaged very differently in the Maigret stories. Here, too, investigations unveil something hidden beneath reality. But this 'something', far from being temporary and

local, or the result of perverse intrigues on the part of a brilliant calculator, has a general and permanent character. The representation of the social world that unfolds in Simenon's stories is in fact wholly based on the opposition between the deceptive appearances of a surface reality and the more tenacious reality of the relations, motives and passions that surface reality conceals. It is on the occasion of, or owing to the fact of, malicious acts by dubious individuals (who in the Holmes stories are usually anarchists, foreigners and/or women) that rifts in reality are produced. In this conception, the very essence of reality resides in the fact that it is deployed in precisely what is real about it only by contrast with the illusory forms under which it presents itself if things are taken at face value. Now this truth, which is revealed in the course of an inquiry under circumstances so exceptional that they preclude the perpetuation of illusions, that is, on the occasion of murders, is not for its part a totally hidden, irremediably inaccessible truth. It is what everyone knows but does not want to see, or know, or express or acknowledge, at least in public.

This sociological position-taking concerning the nature of the social world is particularly evident every time the investigation reaches the point of challenging the apparent respectability of a city, a milieu, a profession or a family (and this occurs in almost all the novels). It is most obvious when the progress of the investigation leads Maigret to penetrate the bourgeoisie, for instance via a circle of prominent individuals in a provincial city, where in order to discover the truth he has to break down a wall of silence and unmask hypocrisy. In fact, the lower classes, because they are naturally closer to crime, have less to hide; this is also the case with the members of international high society - often foreigners whose names suggest central European, Anglo-Saxon or Jewish origins. But the fact is that, in normal times, when the routines of social life are not disturbed by murder, it is common knowledge that everyone lies, hides something shameful, misleads and deceives others regarding what he or she truly is, especially in the area of sexual or financial activities; however, this fact in no way disturbs the ordinary functioning of the mosaic of milieus that makes up society. And at bottom this fact is no one's business, not even the Administration's, at least when its own most immediate interests are not involved.

In a society of this type, precisely because it is not liberal, and because it is, consequently, not based on its citizens' adherence to a general order that is indissolubly legal, moral and economic, the state is at once omnipresent and very remote. In one and the same gesture, it practises surveillance and it closes its eyes. The violence – only

weakly limited by respect for law – with which the state occasionally intervenes goes hand-in-hand with a kind of laissez-faire approach to everything having to do with civil life, at least when appearances are respected. Administrative agents, and especially policemen, are comparable in this sense to colonial administrators who, knowing that the natives will always be natives, exercise continual surveillance but do not intervene directly unless the interests of the occupying power are threatened. As for ordinary persons, they have learned, over centuries of social struggle, to live in duplicity for their part as well, that is, they have learned to distinguish between the recognition of formal equality that has been granted them as citizens of a nation-state and the effective character of the statutory differences that place each of them in a position or a state from which they know, realistically, that they can escape only with great difficulty – and only by shrewdness, cunning, deceit and sometimes crime.

The social basis for the criminal imagination

Sherlock Holmes is an excellent witness to the type of order of which post-Victorian England boasted. This order was simultaneously aristocratic, capitalist and liberal. The division of the human milieu into classes was treated as a natural, virtually providential order. As for the sovereignty of the state, or rather, of the Empire, it was embodied in the dual power of royalty and Parliament, the latter largely dominated by an aristocracy that was turning precociously towards capitalism.³⁸ There was thus no hiatus between the way in which relations among individuals were organized and the way in which the state was arranged. The same logic inhabited both. The same seamless fabric linked what belonged to economic power and what belonged to political authority, to the point that these were almost indistinguishable (at least if one brackets the disreputable wealthy types, who were almost always either 'newly rich' or foreigners).

The state was indeed a principle of organization. But its organizing role, in conformity with the prescriptions of liberalism, was limited to tracing a framework within which the potentialities of the human milieu – that is, of the capitalist-aristocratic order organized in clearly distinct social classes – could be developed. The state also had a repressive mission. But this involved a struggle against the adverse forces that risked hampering the self-organization of the human milieu, consisting of anarchists, foreigners, swindlers who did not respect contracts, and sometimes the newly rich; more gener-

ally, the state struggled against the rebellious leanings of the lower classes. In such cases, police action was useful and even necessary in order to allow the human milieu to return to a situation of equilibrium and to pursue its autonomous development. Similarly, the state, inspired by philanthropists, could support reformist projects, especially in the area of education, in such a way as to combat the excesses of extreme poverty (which were attributed primarily to the wayward and perverse tendencies of the poor), to the extent that these excesses threatened the harmony of the economic and political order (Himmelfarb 1991). But measures like these were only one manifestation among others of the charitable spirit that motivated the rich (when they were of the good sort), that is, those who also were in possession of legitimate political authority, which was based in turn on the authority of Parliament.

In a political order of this type, which is also necessarily a social order, the distinction between public and private is of prime importance in principle but wholly secondary in practice. It plays a central role to the extent that it sets up a constitutional separation through a legal act that establishes the powers of the state and simultaneously determines the limits of those powers. In this sense, it protects the persons present on the territory against abusive interventions by the state and it hinders the intrusive tendencies that every administrative bureaucracy possesses.³⁹ It does so in particular by requiring the bureaucracy to manifest a certain regularity and a certain transparency so as to keep administrative measures from being implemented in an arbitrary or covert way. The principle of transparency is the counterpart to the principle of privacy. The state's acts must be made public, above all by the press, while the acts accomplished by persons in the course of their private lives are entitled to be treated with discretion and can even remain secret. The relation between the requirement of transparency concerning public acts and the requirement of discretion concerning private acts is what allows something like a 'civil society' to be constituted.

But this difference in principle turns out to be largely relativized in practice, all the more so for persons holding elevated positions in the hierarchy. In fact, powerful persons whose privileged position stems both from their membership in respectable, wealthy and often noble old families and from the importance of their role on the economic level are also those who govern. Consequently, where these persons are concerned, it is very difficult to make sharp distinctions between acts that affect their private lives alone (business relations, family life or love life) and those that touch on the workings of the state.

Everything that concerns them thus has a tendency to become public because the public gaze (especially as mediated by journalists) is constantly turned towards them, and the least of their acts affects their reputation. Now, it is part of the logic of reputation that it concerns persons (and/or the families to which they belong) grasped in their synthetic unity and not in acts that they may have accomplished at one moment or another under well-defined circumstances within a particular domain. It is hard, for example, to insist that a certain man is fulfilling his responsibilities perfectly well and that he is just the man for the job, in this light, even though as a financier he is a virtual swindler or leads a dissolute sex life. Many men of state have also been involved in swindling, of course, not to mention sexual escapades, but these features have remained in the shadows, at least as long as the individuals were in power. The logic of reputations thus tends to affect actors who occupy official positions in a way that blurs the separation between the private person and the public figure.

A political order of this type, which combines aristocratism (in the sense in which it is based on credit attributed to old, respectable families), capitalism and democracy of opinion (that is, a liberal order), is thus inhabited by a sort of inherent contradiction. This contradiction has to do with the importance granted on the one hand to the legal distinction between public and private, a distinction supposed to protect persons against intrusions by the state and give them elbow room to conduct their affairs as they think best, and on the other hand to the requirement of transparency where public acts and persons are concerned. Respect for this transparency is ensured by a press that is autonomous, at least ideally, with respect to the state, and that assumes the task of enlightening public opinion. The intrusive vigilance of public opinion gives a great deal of weight to the effects of reputation. The seat of this tension lies in the very person of important individuals, for at least three reasons.

The first has to do with the nature of the liberal state. In relation to other political orders (for example, absolutist monarchies based on divine right, or contemporary bureaucratic states), the principal feature of the liberal state is a weakened representation of the state *in itself*. A state in itself has the massive character of a large fleshly being with its own anatomy (the structure of positions of authority), mode of reproduction (for example, through competitive examinations, as in the Chinese mandarin system described by Max Weber), customs and own morality (its primordial interest in self-perpetuation, the Reason of state). It thus finds itself endowed with a sort of autonomous existence, relatively independent of that of the human persons

who occupy positions in its body, keep it functioning and practically constitute – if the Leviathanesque metaphor is acceptable – its food. Now, liberalism, to the extent that it takes shape, precisely, with the aim of diminishing the tendency of the Leviathan to spread throughout the entire human milieu and devour it, is led to invent another entity, 'civil society', and to give it its full weight. This process tends to bring together the individual persons who make the state work and the state that they bring into being by lending the state their hands, to the point of making person and state almost indistinguishable. The effect of non-distinction is reinforced by democracy (what Olivier Beaud calls 'the citizen state' (1994: 201) since, at least in principle if not (obviously) in practice, democracy presupposes that any citizen whatsoever has the capacity to perform state functions.

A second reason for the tension stems from the fact that capitalism and the state are intertwined. This is particularly apparent when the same persons run the state and control the land, the means of production, financial capital and thus the labour force, in other words, the rest of the citizenry (or workers who are denied the rights of citizenship). This was the case in Edwardian England; in fact, it is practically always the case in liberal political orders. The logic of capitalism implies both that it cannot do without its association with the state and that it cannot refrain from exceeding the limits of that association.

In fact, capitalism is maintained by activities that are private in nature. Its actors are individuals who impose their own viewpoints and defend their own interests, but who have no authority to impose these on others, even if they have the concrete power to do so; in principle, then, they cannot demand obedience, but only the free participation of those whom they exploit. In this sense, one can say that capitalism has no *institutions* of its own, at least if we agree to consider institutions as disembodied beings whose authority over the relations between states of things and symbolic forms is primarily semantic. This authority relies on a principle of legitimacy that, although it is always referred back to some prior agency and is thereby virtually indeterminable, confers a sort of sovereign authority on institutions to determine the qualifications and values attributed to the beings that are subject to it, whether these are human beings or things (Boltanski 2011 [2009]: 50–82). It follows that what can be called the 'institutions of capitalism' (Williamson 1985) always have roots in one or more nation-states or in interstate conventions. The reason for this probably lies in the fact that, unlike a state, capitalism, even though it relies on means that are hardly lacking in violence,

does not possess a 'monopoly on legitimate violence'. The violence it exercises, whether on the citizens of the nation on which specific capitalist enterprises depend or, even more visibly, on the subdued populations of conquered regions, thus cannot be enacted without the support of states, as the example of colonialism makes clear. Direct participation of capitalist actors in the workings of the state thus constitutes the most appropriate way to put a state's authority at the service of capitalism, whether, for example, in order to guarantee property rights, contracts and rules governing exchanges, or in order to establish the standards and codes designed to specify the properties of things destined to circulate in the form of merchandise.

Nevertheless, capitalism cannot prosper either by confining itself to the legal logic that characterizes the state or by tying itself wholly to the national interests and nationalist ideologies that have constituted the basis for liberal conceptions of the state, justified by the search for a common good identified with the welfare of the nation associated with a territory and a population. Capital exists as such only if it circulates, and its persistence thus depends on the fluidity of its symbolic embodiments or representations; it tends to evade any even slightly serious attempts to limit its movements, either by imposing strict rules on these movements or by keeping them within national borders. The same ambiguity affects the relations of capitalism in the regulatory realm, especially where legal norms are concerned. On the one hand, as we have seen, capitalism cannot get along without regulations adopted and imposed by the state to stabilize its environment, especially by limiting competition and making it possible to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate competition; on the other hand, in its very functioning capitalism consistently tends to go beyond the regulations that are imposed on it. Every operator means to subject his competitors to regulations that he himself tries to circumvent. This relation to regulations – ambivalent, to say the least – takes advantage of international exchanges that make it possible to play on a broad register of differing regulations that correspond to the legal frameworks of the various countries among which capital circulates.

One of the consequences of the ambivalent character of the relation between capitalism and the state is that, since in liberal capitalist democracies the major figures who participate in governing the nation are also most often major actors on the economic scene, the liberties they take as businessmen always risk affecting their reputation as members of the government.

In the final analysis, however, these actors are human beings. Moreover, in the society that witnessed the birth of the detective

story – a liberal society, to be sure, but still imbued with patriarchal values – even more than today, these figures were masculine specimens of humankind, affected by passions, inclinations, irrepressible drives that could lead them to commit acts that, once known to the public, could seriously affect their reputations. In absolutist or bureaucratic states, persons who embody state power may perfectly well also conduct themselves, especially on the sexual level, in ways that would discredit an ordinary bourgeois individual without doing themselves any harm. In contrast, in a liberal political order, those who participate in the nation's government must force themselves to lead a life that conforms to the prevailing morality (what was once called 'bourgeois morality') precisely to the extent that the state in which they occupy an eminent position is weaker than an absolutist or bureaucratic state, closer to those who serve it in their very persons and whom it serves in return. Thus they have to be subjected to a particularly meticulous and demanding educational effort so that they will be endowed with a powerful superego capable of reinforcing their capacities for self-control.

The superego⁴⁰ is indeed, in this case, an intermediate formation between the individual psyche, the human milieu capable of selforganization, and the state, inasmuch as the latter is responsible for stimulating harmonious self-organization and for struggling against whatever might put it at risk. This superego must keep the important, responsible actors from performing fraudulent acts in the exercise of their public charges - such as embezzling funds - or acts of corruption or treason. But, in a liberal order, the trust that can be placed in these actors is largely ensured by the administrative control to which they are subject. It is thus especially with respect to everything involving their private lives that the superego of leading figures must be effective. In fact, if one wants to avoid having the state penetrate into bourgeois or aristocratic households, one has to ensure that the acts that take place there do not go too far beyond the bounds of the law and have a more or less irreproachable character in relation to the prevailing moral norms, defined not with reference to the Reason of state but in relation to the ordinary moral sense of those who are subject to the state.

This applies to anyone who deals with the management of the patrimony or the conduct of business, especially where family and sexual life are concerned. The vast estates where prominent leaders live shelter a large population comprising masters and servants, not to mention relatives, and especially poor relatives – old maids or innocent young orphans – who occupy an intermediate position between

the two classes and who, owing to their weakness, are entirely under the power of the master(s) of the house. We are familiar with the way English sentimental novels and later noir novels have succeeded in exploiting these closed worlds so as to bring out their highly troubled and highly charged atmosphere. A master's superego has to allow him either to avoid the temptations, sexual in particular, that such situations offer or else, failing this, to maintain his illicit acts at a level beyond which it might be difficult to keep them hidden.

In their Anglo-Saxon form, detective stories thus constitute dramatizations of the dilemmas that develop in liberal societies around the tension between two antagonistic principles. On the one hand, there is the public-private separation and respect for the private lives of individuals; on the other, the requirement of transparency, which, mainly through the intermediary of a free press, is supposed to allow public opinion to control the acts of public persons, including acts accomplished in the realm of private life. Mystery stories, especially when they include criminal elements (and they almost always do), set up conjunctures in which public power in its two forms – the one embodied in the state and the one represented by the press – is authorized to look inside homes, even bourgeois or noble ones, so as to discover and reveal the most sordid secrets.

The liberal context whose features we have just reviewed is absent from the Maigret stories. As a French policeman, Maigret confronts a social reality that results from a very different historical relation between the human milieu and the state. In this context, the human milieu also has capacities for self-organization. But this self-organization is fragmentary, hidden in the folds of habit and always potentially transgressive. It is carried out independently of, if not in opposition to, the state, and thus in a more or less disorderly fashion. The fragments made up of specific 'milieus' - sometimes local, sometimes professional or associated with certain social classes - have their own norms, or rather their 'customs', which are modelled on the Milieu, the underworld of criminality and transgression; they readily take on the character of mafias. The multiplicities that are self-organized in differentiated milieus thus escape any form of spontaneous totalization. They would be incapable of banding together so as to form a society without the organizing will of the state. The state sometimes closes its eyes to their social and moral life and allows them to manage themselves according to their particular customs; at other times, it manifests itself in an authoritarian and potentially violent fashion, when those customs take a turn deemed overly transgressive and constitute a challenge to the very possibility

of an overall order. The continued existence of a nation that did not exist prior to the efforts made to bring it into being thus depends essentially on the actions of the state. Without the state's organizing efforts, local dependencies, class solidarities or political connivances would necessarily win out over the composition of a whole, which is always threatened by antagonisms that tend towards fragmentation, when they do not take the form of outright civil war.

This way of establishing the contours of reality, which underlies Simenon's stories, is thus very unlike the one sketched out in Doyle's narratives. In the post-Victorian liberal state, the adjustment between society and state was based on the existence of a dominant class that was at the heart of civil society and political society alike. Conversely, in the social reality that unfolds in the Maigret stories, the powers at work in the human milieu are dissociated from the power of the state, at least in principle, if not in fact. In this narrative set-up, the state, as a legitimate agency, is embodied in the Administration alone. It is the Administration that makes public power visible and ensures its continuity, whatever the political regime on which a particular government – always treated as temporary and more or less arbitrary - may rely. The Administration alone can do this, for it alone holds a position of oversight that ensures its independence in relation to the various milieus, local powers, economic forces, political or religious partialities and the state itself as a political entity. Its independence with respect to local hierarchies and powers guarantees its impartiality. But it also strives to enjoy as much autonomy as possible – to be sure, always presented, with regret, as relative - over the political powers that in principle assure the governing of the totality that the nation-state constitutes. In fact, political power, and particularly the power embodied in parliaments, but also, as a result, in ministries and cabinets, can be more or less monopolized, according to the power relations among the various segments of the dominant class, by one or another of the partisan or religious factions. Or it can be altered by self-interested and thus culpable indulgence towards a given local social milieu. The state, when it is embodied in political forces, is always at risk of being corrupted. In Simenon's novelistic universe, which is profoundly anti-liberal, that is, at once anti-parliamentary and radically mistrustful or critical of the rich and powerful,⁴¹ the only forces on which the government, guarantor of the integrity of the state, can rely are found among the 'competents'.

These members of the lower and middle bourgeoisie, often from 'modest backgrounds', owe their positions to merit alone; they are educated and thus enlightened; among them, doctors in particular

embody the blend of disinterestedness, devotion to the common good and clear-eyed rationalism, or humanistic materialism, that makes a good civil servant. We have seen that Maigret himself, from a modest family, had begun to study medicine before joining the police, but had to give up his studies for want of sufficient economic means. It is because he is not only a police agent devoted to his administration but also, like the admirable doctors, a man in whom one can confide, someone who knows how to listen and understand, that Maigret succeeds in solving crimes. Like a good doctor, he knows all about human beings in general, their inclinations and their drives, and also, like a true sociologist, all that each person owes to the social conditions in which he or she was thrust at birth.

The comparison between the two police worlds, Sherlock Holmes's and Maigret's, thus offers an interesting perspective for grasping the sensibilities associated, in France, with the opposition between the left and the right. It must be said first of all that the two universes, each in its own way, are equally reactionary and nationalistic. In both worlds, women are relegated to minority roles; they are viewed essentially either as victims or as sources of danger in the English narratives and as sexual objects in the French ones. Deviants are at least potentially criminal and thus always suspect. The same is true of foreigners, especially those in 'irregular' situations; in many cases these are also dangerous revolutionaries with anarchistic and criminal drives. For a French reader, the world of Sherlock Holmes is frankly conservative, but in an archaic modality that makes it difficult to take seriously the nevertheless profoundly political aim that animates the stories. The importance granted to members of rich and noble families in these narratives leaves no room for doubt about the author's conservatism. but the characters Doyle puts on stage are sufficiently exotic for the novelistic charm of Edwardian England to win out over any other consideration. Still, if one wants to do justice to Sherlock Holmes, hero of the liberal world, one must note that he is the defender of a state that is, even so, a state of law, that is, a state in which private life is relatively protected except when the violence of murder opens it up to the outside; in this state, one cannot lock up just anyone for just anything, even criminals and foreigners (often conflated) are not excessively mistreated by the police and even the rich and powerful can be called to account before the courts and made objects of public opprobrium. It is moreover to protect the latter from this affront that Sherlock Holmes uses great discretion in denouncing the sordid affairs in which they are implicated.

Again from the standpoint of French readers, Maigret's adven-

tures and personality may touch those with a left-wing sensibility or a penchant for the 'modest'. As we have seen, the Commissioner comes from a 'modest background'. His personal preferences incline him towards 'modest' folk rather than towards important figures, who intimidate and disgust him. He has 'modest' tastes (pipes, but presumably filled with cheap tobacco; calvados; heavy 'home-cooked' food; unpretentious local restaurants; films). His mental capacities are 'modest': he understands everything by intuition, has good sense and never indulges in useless speculation; he is by no means an intellectual, and he is never seen reading anything that might resemble a book. Above all, his financial resources are 'modest'. He is disinterested, does not seek money and detests the rich. Even if Maigret professes no particular political opinion and appears rather conservative in all matters, there is still something 'left-wing' about him, at least in the sense that the liberal mindset is entirely foreign to him.

Nevertheless, we must note that the anti-parliamentarianism that imbues a number of the Maigret stories does not really attest to democratic tendencies. In addition, for Maigret and for the police of which he is a part, the difference between what naturally falls under the Administration's power and what, stemming from the private realm, is supposed to remain out of the Administration's reach has no relevance. Let us add, finally, that, however paradoxical it may appear, the state's administrative bureaucracy, and quite specifically the police, as described in the Maigret stories, are in no way universes under legal constraints. The state to which Maigret devotes himself is not a state of law; far from it. Police actions are opaque, and journalists, objects of scorn, are manipulated or deliberately misled and sent off on wild goose chases to mislead public opinion. Similarly, policemen do not hesitate for a moment to stage more or less dubious ploys to confound suspects, nor do they refrain from working them over during interminable sessions of interrogation. Maigret himself sometimes lets himself go so far as to slap suspects, especially when these are very young people starting down the 'wrong path', but he always does so as a father ('a good family man') would discipline his son in order to put him back on the right track. As will have become clear, the 'left-wing' tonality of Simenon's novels relates to a very specific expression of the anti-'liberal' left: the one that prevailed in the Vichy context, interested in forging a compromise between authoritarian statism, governmental omnipresence, patriarchal ideology, traditionalism, celebration of popular good sense, xenophobia and exacerbated nationalism. It must also be noted, however, that Maigret's Vichy tendencies are, like his entire person, also 'modest'

and, in a way, unconscious or natural. As we have seen, Maigret does not have well-defined political ideas, and even less an ideology. He displays nothing but honest good sense and a solid realism. He actually seems to be rather sceptical or even relativist by inclination. But scepticism, relativism and even humanism may be manifested in particular moments of life, and especially of one's inner life, without endangering one's global adherence to a social order that rejects these ways of being in the world, when reality as a whole finds itself permeated and formatted by fascistic arrangements. Realism in such a case is nothing but the transformation of these arrangements into tendencies that, as they permeate subjectivities, acquire a quasi-natural character.

Spy novels as offshoots of crime novels

The constitution of espionage fiction as an original genre followed that of detective fiction by about thirty years. Although stories about spies and spying appeared in French novels in the early twentieth century (in works by Maurice Leblanc in particular), it can be argued that the genre took root in its canonical forms in Great Britain around the outbreak of the First World War. To uncover the structures of this genre, I shall rely on a narrative whose foundational role is unquestionable: John Buchan's *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, published in 1915. This novel can be considered *original* in that it established the principal constraints that define the genre. I shall argue that, as is the case with crime novels, the countless spy novels that followed Buchan's, and especially those written after the 1950s, during the Cold War, can be read as transformations – sometimes with inverted values (as when the state, whether spied-upon or spying, is no longer depicted as a victim but as an aggressor) – of the matrix set forth by Buchan.

The classic spy novel shares many features with detective fiction. In both cases, agents of the state and/or private persons are confronted with enigmas, threats and violence. Above all, both genres use the same basic mechanism, which consists in generating anxiety about the solidity and stability of *reality*. Behind what is customarily taken as real, another reality hides, dark and impenetrable. Certain individuals, apparently respectable and problem-free (for example, a learned, elderly man living in retirement in a charming seaside villa) are revealed as having another identity, and their actions, apparently inconsequential, hint at insidious and disturbing intentions. Situations that are seemingly ordinary and peaceful (for example, a neighbourly

bridge game in a living room warmed by a fine wood fire), turn out to be fraught with immeasurable danger. But this mechanism also entails (after numerous reversals) quelling the anxiety that has been stirred up and restoring the reality that has been disturbed. In both cases, the anxiety aroused and then appeared brings into play expectations placed upon the state. Initially, the state is expected to be able to sustain the mission it took on when it proclaimed itself a nationstate invested with sovereignty, namely, guaranteeing the security of a population on a given territory in all its vital dimensions: a task that implies a virtually total mastery of reality. Then, after the state has momentarily allowed doubt to arise about its ability to confront the challenge it faces, it proves capable after all of meeting the requirements it had set for itself. The crime novel and even more clearly the spy novel thus function as narrative arrangements that dramatize the trials a state faces and the way it manages to come through them to its own advantage. The dramatization also signifies – at least from the perspective that presides over the classic forms of these two genres - that the outcome is in the national interest.

Secondary features are superimposed on this shared motif, including, of course, violence and the legitimate self-defence that the state exercises when it responds in kind to violence (or to a threat of violence) on the part of criminal or subversive individuals, responding with violence on the part of its own agents or other men of goodwill who put themselves at its service. Lies and duplicity are also among these secondary features: the possibility of duplicity gives rise to radical uncertainty about the actions, the intentions and even the identities of the principal actors. In crime and spy fiction alike, no one is exempt from suspicion, which means that it is impossible to be certain of the authenticity of the properties that the actors display in their self-presentations and self-characterizations. Finally, in spy novels perhaps more than in crime novels, a mental outlook that under normal conditions might be read as an index of a paranoid personality turns out to be fully justified. The protagonists are plunged into such great uncertainty that the requirement of proof as to the reality of what is presented as real tends towards infinite regression.

One other figure that we have identified in classic crime fiction, the divided hero, is also present in spy fiction. However, this figure appears neither in the form of a split between a detective and a policeman (as in the Sherlock Holmes stories) nor in that of a split personality within a single actor, separating the civil servant from the man (as in the Maigret stories), but rather in the form of an even more decisive split: the hero turns out to be two beings in one, both

hunter and hunted. In the earliest spy novels, the character on whom the state depends is an ordinary man who not only works for the government but finds himself accused and pursued both by the enemies of the state and by the licensed agents – policemen or traitors – of the state that he is undertaking to save, as it were, in spite of itself. This is the case, as we shall see, with Richard Hannay, Buchan's hero, but also with Carruther and Davies, the heroes of Erskine Childers's *The Riddle of the Sands*, a novel that prefigures Buchan's in certain respects (Seed 1990), and in their wake, the spy stories written in the 1930s and 1940s by Eric Ambler and Graham Greene (especially Greene's *The Ministry of Fear*, published in 1943).

The two states of the state

There is nevertheless an important difference between crime fiction and spy fiction having to do with the state of the state, as it were. The state depicted in a crime novel is in a state of peace; in a spy novel, the state is presented in a state of war. In both cases, violence and disorder or anomalies that appear initially in the form of enigmas, mysteries to be solved, intervene to rip the seamless fabric of reality, understood as a set of phenomena organized according to stable causal relations that allow predictability. But when the state is envisaged in a state of peace, these anomalies are attributed to isolated individuals, or to a small number of individuals acting in concert for private motives (typically money, reputation and/or sex, as we have seen): in other words, personal interests are at stake. The anomalies are thus *local* singularities belonging to the order of events. Like all events, each has a particular character, but the entities to which these singular events can be attributed if they are to have meaning - and the function of the investigation is to give them meaning – are also singular persons. Their existence does constitute a challenge to expectations about the stability of reality (since security would no longer be assured if such singularities were to multiply), and reality finds itself split between a surface reality, apparent but partly or completely illusory, and an underlying reality, hidden but authentic. However, this duality does not pose an immediate global threat to reality because the events in question do not expressly engage the state itself as guarantor of reality. Crime fiction can be said to be apolitical in the sense that the state is not featured in confrontation with its enemies (even though a major criminal can be characterized as 'public enemy number one' and thus be viewed in the same light as a 'terrorist').

In this framework, then, the alteration of reality does not affect society as a whole, but rather some particular point: a village, a milieu, an organization, a person or group of persons and so on, whose corruption is revealed by the emergence of a mystery and its solution. At least, in the classic crime novels, the state remains intact, all of a piece. Not until the genre undergoes transformations around the midtwentieth century, especially with American noir fiction, do we see corruption, initially presented as local, spread throughout society as a whole, to the point where it affects the state itself and its representatives, who are sometimes just as duplications and corrupt as criminals. The sort of immunity, or rather exteriority, from which the state benefits in the earliest crime fiction confers on this entity the power to repair the tears in the fabric of reality, ruptures of which crime, with its aura of mystery, is the manifestation on the local level. The power to restore the order of things derives from the legitimate authority available to the state. But precisely because this power is self-limited by a system of laws, as we have seen, its exercise often requires recourse to a supplement. This supplement consists either in the intervention of auxiliary personnel (amateur detectives like Sherlock Holmes), especially when the criminals belong to the elite and are involved in the very workings of the state, or in the deployment of properly human capacities that exceed, and sometimes distort, the directives of the administrative bureaucracy (as in Maigret's case).

It is possible, of course, to reject the idea that the classic crime novels are apolitical and to pronounce them conservative since they take the side of order. But this shift implies envisaging them from an external viewpoint, one from which critical judgement can be passed on the order in question. For it is inherent in the structure of crime fiction that the forces of order always win out in the end. The state at peace is thus a strong state, in the sense that it manages to gain control over disruptive factors and to reconstitute the lineaments of a predictable reality. Once the duplicitous actors have been unmasked, there is no further call for suspicion, and appearances converge with reality once again.

The classic spy novels are clearly of a different order. They feature a state *in a state of war*, whether the responsible parties in the state are conscious of this or not: as in *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, they may remain unaware of the threat or underestimate the importance of the assault launched against public powers. A state in a state of war is a state whose fragility comes to the foreground since as an entity, that is, as a moral person, it is subjected to a *trial* from which the reader is given to understand that it may not emerge triumphant (otherwise,

there would be neither suspense nor fiction). A state at war does not merely have criminal individuals to confront. It has to struggle against a more or less sizeable, more or less organized coalition that threatens its personal integrity. As a quasi-individual, the state has to defend its own existence at all costs. Spy novels are thus by construction *political*, since their topic is the struggle undertaken by one collective – the one embodied in the nation-state – against another that is its enemy, whether the latter has a name, as is the case when another nation-state is involved, or remains undefined, as is the case when the state has to defend itself against poorly identified subversive intrigues.

This dramatic situation considerably increases the level of uncertainty, which becomes generalized. The state itself is affected; it is no longer exempt from either duplicity or suspicion. This holds true, of course, for the leaders of foreign powers whose espionage activity is carried out on the national territory. But it also holds true - as is the case in the canonical version of the spy novel that will serve as our example – for the state in question, which is supposed to lead and protect society. Society as a whole finds itself threatened by the intrigues – in the form of conspiracies – of vast subversive, clandestine organizations that extend well beyond national boundaries and whose ramifications spread to the heart of the nation-state itself, for the state finds itself partly or wholly corrupted, or at the very least reduced to impotence. It then falls to some individual lacking any official mandate - just a regular person, but one endowed with a conscience, intelligence and uncommon courage – to ensure the defence of society, at his own risk. And to do so with no help from the state, sometimes even acting against the state.

Spy novels and war novels

Spy novels, although they are built around death struggles between political entities, are nevertheless not to be confused with war novels, which belong to a different genre. Without going into too much detail, let us note that war novels essentially take two forms: heroic and unanimist on the one hand, individualist and at least potentially critical on the other. In the first case, the author takes the viewpoint of the totality: the text may feature singular individuals, but it nevertheless shows us how a nation, under the direction of a state, confronts heroically and with unanimity the violence practised by one or more other nation-states. In the second case, the author describes the adventures experienced by persons who often embody social types and who are

thrown into war in spite of themselves. In narratives of this type, which were numerous after the First World War (they include Louis-Ferdinand Céline's Death on the Installment Plan and Jean Renoir's film *Grand Illusion*), heroic figures prepared to die for the fatherland or cowardly characters ready to do anything to save their own skin are plunged into a course of events without grasping their causes, their evolution or even their ultimate purpose. This type of war novel hinges for the most part on contrasts between individual destinies and blind, uncontrollable collective forces. They show us how reality, as an ordered network of predictable causalities, comes undone, and how each person experiences this collapse, whatever his or her local situation may be. Such narratives thus have something in common with the picaresque novel, in that the latter is built around the tribulations of some individual, neither better nor worse than any other, who is plunged into an incoherent, dangerous and unpredictable social world where the contours of reality constantly tend to shift and change shape (one day's protector may become the next day's aggressor). One consequence is that, like picaresque novels, war stories do not lend themselves very well to the construction of a mystery since there is an a priori presumption that anything at all can happen. Mysteries in fact become salient only against the background of a stable reality. War – large-scale war, open warfare between states – is indeed the antagonist of peace, not only because human beings are seeking to destroy one another instead of tolerating the others' existence despite their competing interests but also because the stability of reality that characterizes the state of peace is no longer assured by the play of ordinary everyday interactions. Either the state's role in maintaining reality becomes hyper-controlling and takes on its most authoritarian dimensions, or else situations arise in which reality tends to come undone, most strikingly, for instance, in moments of panic, debacle, or exodus.¹

Who, and where, is the enemy?

The main difference between war stories and spy stories is that the latter have something like peace as their framework. Spy novels certainly offer glimpses of war, but war carried out under the cover of what appears to be peace. These works indicate what war, covert war, is like in peacetime. Ordinary citizens and even sometimes those responsible for the state, or at least most of them, believe naively that the state is at peace and act accordingly – whereas in fact the state has never ceased to be at war. What the spy novel seeks to tell us – and

this is its key mechanism – is that the state is *always* at war, always threatened, always fragile, even when ordinary – that is, unseeing – people are unaware of this. Or, put another way, the spy novel tells us that it is part of the very essence of a state to be at war.

This perpetual secret war, carried out under cover of peace, is directed against enemies who, in their standard form, are undercover soldiers, military officers or civil servants working for the secret services of other states. In the earliest espionage novels, and especially in those written in England between 1880 and 1914 (thus prior to the publication of Buchan's *Thirty-Nine Steps*), the 'other state' is most often Germany. Buchan's principal innovation, which was widely adopted by later writers, was the intricate blending of two relatively different genres that had both appeared a short time before: spy stories in which the enemies are agents of a foreign power; and stories of subversive conspiracies. Conspiracy became a prominent motif starting in the late nineteenth century; we shall look more closely later at the best-known example, Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* (1997 [1907]). In Conrad's story, the enemies are agents of socialist, communist or anarchist forces that threaten society.

The hero of the earliest spy novels, in the genre established by Buchan, is thus up against a hidden enemy representing both external and internal forces. The role of the enemy – or the opponent, to use an actantial category borrowed from A. J. Greimas (1983 [1966]: 205-6) - can be filled not only by agents of other states but also by subversive collectives, foreigners, citizens (or at least people who appear to be citizens); not only by notorious individuals but by (seemingly) respectable people, rich or poor, private persons or highly placed officials (the great majority of whom are naive, cowardly or traitorous); and so on. Suspicion, the driving force behind detective fiction, is taken to the extreme. It is no longer just on the local level, in a certain district or a certain village, around a specific crime, that anyone at all can be suspected and that anything at all can happen. Suspicion arises everywhere and at every moment, whether or not there is an attested crime. In spy fiction, mysteries do not occupy a central position because the very possibility of crime is constitutive of reality. It is hard to detach the moment at which a crime is committed from the ordinary course of action, for administering or suffering death, familiar events in wartime, are part of the normal course of human relations here. The difference is that, in the narrative context of a spy novel, it is not easy to distinguish clearly between cases of death inflicted to satisfy the demands of service and murders committed for personal reasons, so intermingled are friends and enemies - and the

actors are often involved in friendly or even amorous relations. The enemy, close at hand but invisible, threatens the nation both from without and from within. Spy fiction is thus placed at the point of indistinction between inside and outside, public and private, which characterizes the state of exception (Agamben 2005). The defence of the state as guarantor of reality, envisaged in its national dimension, presupposes viewing all citizens and even all human beings, whether present on the national territory or acting from a distance, as real or potential suspects. Similarly, there is no situation, however banal in appearance, which does not contain the seeds of danger.

The Thirty-Nine Steps as the prototype of the spy novel

It will be useful to summarize John Buchan's inaugural novel in its broad outlines before pursuing the analysis further. The hero of *The* Thirty-Nine Steps is Richard Hannay, a young English colonial from South Africa. After accumulating an honest fortune and distinguishing himself by his service in the Boer Wars, Hannay has settled in London to taste the pleasures of the capital, far from the rough life of the bush with its ferocious natives (who can be cut down like rabbits) and its gold mines, although everything in the city bores and even disgusts him. Let us note that the protagonist's colonial origin is an important hallmark of the classic spy novel, which developed – as Clive Bloom remarks (1990) – at the intersection between crime novels and 'imperrial novels'. Bloom uses the latter term to designate adventure novels set in the context of the colonial empire; at the time The Thirty-Nine Steps appeared, Henry Rider Haggard, who like Buchan himself³ had served in the colonial administration in South Africa during the Boer War, was one of its most popular representatives. Indeed, Allan Quatermain, the hero of eighteen African adventure stories published by Haggard between the mid-1880s and the 1920s,4 can be seen as one of the figures that inspired Buchan's creation of Richard Hannay.⁵

At the beginning of the novel, Hannay is on his way home one evening when someone accosts him and demands to speak with him at once. This man, an American named Scudder, tells him such an outrageous tale that Hannay wonders at first whether he is dealing with a madman. The stranger claims that he has discovered the existence of a secret society, 'The Black Stone', whose members intend to assassinate a Greek statesman, Constantine Karolides, during the latter's next visit to London. Scudder is the only man still capable of thwarting this conspiracy, whose mysteries he had discovered by gathering information

from all over Europe: 'in an inn on the Achensee in Tyrol ... in a furshop in the Galician quarter of Buda, in a Strangers' Club in Vienna, and in a little bookshop off the Racknitzstrasse in Leipsic' (Buchan 1993 [1915]: 12–13), in Paris, Hamburg, Bergen, and so on. But the men of The Black Stone have discovered his plans and are trying to kill him. He has succeeded feigning death in order to escape his pursuers.

The mysterious Scudder, who had played a role in public life in a previous existence, reveals his vision of high-level politics to Hannay:

Away behind all the Governments and the armies there was a big subterranean movement going on, engineered by very dangerous people. He had come on it by accident; it fascinated him; he went further, and then he got caught. I gathered that most of the people in it were the sort of educated anarchists that make revolutions, but that beside them there were financiers who were playing for money. A clever man can make big profits on a falling market, and it suited the book of both classes to set Europe by the ears.

He told me some queer things that explained a lot that had puzzled me – things that happened in the Balkan War, how one state suddenly came out on top, why alliances were made and broken, why certain men disappeared, and where the sinews of war came from. The aim of the whole conspiracy was to get Russia and Germany at loggerheads.

When I asked why, he said that the anarchist lot thought it would give them their chance. Everything would be in the melting-pot, and they looked to see a new world emerge. The capitalists would rake in the shekels, and make fortunes by buying up wreckage. Capital, he said, had no conscience and no fatherland. Besides, the Jew was behind it, and the Jew hated Russia worse than hell. (Ibid.: 10)

Hannay, gradually convinced of Scudder's integrity, agrees to shelter and hide him. But Scudder's enemies, members of the mysterious Black Stone, pick up his trail. One evening Hannay returns home to find Scudder murdered. Rifling through the dead man's belongings, Hannay finally discovers, hidden in a tobacco jar, the little black notebook in which Scudder had been writing things down. The notebook is filled with coded inscriptions that Hannay eventually deciphers. From this point on, Hannay is the last honest man who knows that a terrible conspiracy threatens the social order of Europe. He makes Scudder's cause his own and seeks to unmask the guilty parties in his turn. But he is accused by the English police of having committed murder in his own apartment. He manages to escape by donning a disguise, and he takes a train to Scotland. He gets off at a station in the countryside and, dressed as a Scottish shepherd, he wanders in the heath, pursued both by policemen from his own

country and by Black Stone agents who have been on his trail. In this wild environment, Hannay finds himself at home. In fact, he has all the characteristics of a sportsman, a commonplace figure in the classic spy novel; we can trace it from Davies, the yachtsman who is one of the main characters in Erskine Childers's *The Riddle of the Sands* (a novel that anticipates the espionage genre), to the solitary hero of *Rogue Male* (2002 [1939]), a magnificent novel by Geoffrey Household.⁶ In this narrative, written in the first person, Household features a hunter who seeks to avenge the woman he loves, a victim of Nazi barbarity, by trying to kill Hitler at Berchtesgaden, as one would shoot at large game; when he fails, he takes on the role of a hunted wild beast and digs a sort of foxhole to escape from the Nazi agents who are trying to capture him.

Hannay meets various people during his trek through the moorlands: an innkeeper poet, a Radical candidate, a road surveyor, a bald archaeologist, a fisherman, and so on. Each of these looks like an ordinary Englishman, that is, an individual who is at once easy-going and characterized by properties or manias that border on eccentricity. Isn't eccentricity the expression of freedom that liberal England authorizes? But certain of these people, who cannot be identified, are dangerous agents of The Black Stone. The most striking case is that of an 'old gentleman' who lives in an 'ordinary moorland farm' where Hannay takes refuge from the pack of policemen in pursuit. The 'old gentleman' is seated 'with some papers and open volumes before him ... His face was round and shiny, like Mr Pickwick's, big glasses were stuck on the end of his nose' – the very stereotype of an elderly Englishman (Buchan 1993 [1915]: 60). Nevertheless, he turns out to be one of the leaders of The Black Stone. Hannay sees through him at a glance: 'As he spoke his evelids seemed to tremble and to fall a little over his keen grey eyes. In a flash the phrase of Scudder's came back to me, when he had described the man he most dreaded in the world. He had said that he "could hood his eyes like a hawk". Then I saw that I had walked straight into the enemy's headquarters' (ibid.: 62). Hannay manages to escape. Another man he meets, by chance, or so he thinks, is none other than Sir Walter, an important member of the powers that be and of the secret services: a perfect English gentleman ('the embodiment of law and government and all the conventions'), living in 'a pretty cottage'. He serves Hannay 'a good champagne and . . . some uncommon fine port', then coffee in his study, 'a jolly room full of books and trophies and untidiness and comfort' (77–9). Hannay learns from Sir Walter that the latter has been kept constantly informed about Hannay's wanderings and all his misadventures. Sir

Walter had known Scudder. Hannay is exonerated. But Karolides is assassinated. Hannay then collaborates with eminent persons to keep documents of the utmost importance, documents involving naval defence brought by an emissary from France, from being stolen during a secret meeting in which the First Lord of the Admiralty is to participate. Only five people, all from the highest ranks of the state, know that this meeting is to take place. When it occurs, the First Lord is present, but he is actually an impostor placed there by The Black Stone. Thus Black Stone agents get hold of the secret. Are they going to manage to leave England? No. Continuing to follow the indications provided in Scudder's black notebook, Hannay learns that a yacht is to wait for the spy at the foot of a staircase that has thirty-nine steps going down to the sea. With the Admiralty's help, he discovers the location of this staircase: it starts from a promontory in the garden of a plush and peaceful villa occupied by 'a decent old fellow', another classic Englishman (golf, bridge, tennis, tuxedo, portrait of an old lady in the place of honour above the fireplace, and so on). The Royal Navy succeeds in getting their hands on the spy and retrieving the secret. But war breaks out. 'Three weeks later, as all the world knows, we went to war. I joined the New Army the first week, and owing to my Matabele experience got a captain's commission straight off' (111). War was inevitable, as Scudder had predicted, and England was pushed into it against the will of its leaders:

[War] was coming, as sure as Christmas: had been arranged, said Scudder, ever since February 1912. Karolides was going to be the occasion . . . nothing on earth could prevent that . . . this war was going to come as a mighty surprise to Britain. Karolides' death would set the Balkans by the ears, and then Vienna would chip in with an ultimatum. Russia wouldn't like that, and there would be high words. But Berlin would play the peacemaker, and pour oil on the waters, till suddenly she would find a good cause for a quarrel, pick it up, and in five hours let fly at us. That was the idea, and a pretty good one too. Honey and fair speeches, and then a stroke in the dark. While we were talking about the goodwill and good intentions of Germany our coast would be silently ringed with mines, and submarines would be waiting for every battleship. (38)

Theme and variations

As the summary makes clear, the principal themes of espionage fiction are concentrated in Buchan's short novel. The schema whose

canonical form Buchan established has been used since then in a very large number of novels, films, graphic novels, television series and so on, with multiple variants that deploy the same contradictions in different forms, as in the logic of fairy tales or myths. I shall offer just one example here, borrowed from an atypical novel of the most famous author of detective stories after Arthur Conan Doyle, namely, Agatha Christie: The Big Four (1984 [1927]). Christie's novels are for the most part classic detective stories that include on the model established by Doyle - a doubling between a brilliant detective (Hercule Poirot) and a competent but not overly intelligent policeman (Chief Inspector Japp); their plots involve a crime (always a blood crime) carried out by one or several private individuals, in a restricted context (a village, for example), motivated by personal interest. Political preoccupations, in the sense that these concern the fate and security of states, are absent. The Big Four, written during a troubled period in Christie's life (marked by her divorce and her mysterious disappearance), breaks with this customary format. The novel features a struggle undertaken by Hercule Poirot and his friend Hastings against four brilliant, evil associates ('The Big Four', the 'greatest power for evil in the world') who have devised a conspiracy to establish a worldwide dictatorship. Li Chang Yen, a Chinaman (an embodiment of the 'yellow peril') is its 'controlling brain', its 'master hand', its 'moving spirit'. He is Number One. This 'mandarin' never 'comes out into the limelight'. He remains cloistered in 'his palace in Pekin'; from there he 'pulls strings ... and things happen far away' (23). He is 'the man behind it all . . . The worldwide unrest, the labour troubles that beset every nation, and the revolutions that break out in some. There are people, not scaremongers, who know what they are talking about, and they say that there is a force behind the scenes which aims at nothing less than the disintegration of civilisation' in China, in Russia, everywhere (22). The 'men who loom most largely in the public eye' are instruments, 'marionettes who dance to the wires pulled by a master hand, and that hand is Li Chang Yen's'. The Big Four have unlimited financial resources to use for corruption and propaganda, since Number Two is an American millionaire, Abe Ryland, the richest man in the world. Ultimately, the group controls 'some scientific force more powerful than the world has dreamed of' (23). Indeed, Number Three is a Frenchwoman, Mme Olivier, a scientific genius who has used 'the gamma rays emitted by the substance usually known as Radium C' (51) to perfect a fatal weapon. Finally, Number Four is 'the destroyer'. He carries out the crimes. In a way, he is the most mysterious and ungraspable of the four, for his

peculiar genius lies in his exceptional ability to play roles and totally transform his physical appearance and his persona, so that any one of the novel's characters, however easy-going in appearance, can be suspected of being the mysterious Number Four. Nevertheless, Number Four has one obsessive habit: he plays with bread and rolls little breadballs between his fingers when he is dining; this habit finally gives him away. The Four have a secret hideout: an active quarry in the Dolomites, a subsidiary of an Italian company that actually belongs to Abe Ryland, conceals 'a vast subterranean dwelling . . . hollowed out in the heart of the mountain, secret and inaccessible. From there the leaders of the organisation will issue by wireless their orders to their followers who are numbered in the thousands in every country. And from that crag in the Dolomites the dictators of the world will emerge . . . ' (198).

The state in the classic spy novel

Among the specific features of the earliest spy novels, the ones most relevant for my purposes have to do with the state and the degree of trust one can place in it. These features can be summarized as follows:

- (a) The state is embodied by prominent persons, members of the gentry who are wealthy, refined and cultivated. However,
- (b) These embodiments of the state are distributed among three sets. The first and largest contains naive, blinkered individuals; the second contains traitors; the third contains the rare individuals who have realized that there is danger and are prepared to fight it. But they have to carry out their struggle in secret, since they can trust no one, even at the very top.
- (c) Given the state's weakness, it falls to a simple citizen who is athletic, intrepid and clairvoyant to save the state in spite of itself.
- (d) Nothing distinguishes the rare members of the elite who are trustworthy from the traitors: they all have virtually the same properties and are all equally rich, refined and cultivated.
- (e) The police force is made up of disciplined but unintelligent individuals from lower-class backgrounds.
- (f) The common people, meaning farmers or fishermen as opposed to degenerate urban proletarians in this thematics, are courageous, patriotic, generous and loyal folk. But they are misled by the (self-styled) elites.
- (g) The state, in its honest (but blind) components, is a largely

illusory machine. Its leaders believe they hold a power they do not possess. Real power eludes them. Concealed beneath the trappings and appearances of official power lies the unofficial power in the hands of obscure, subversive forces. The state is thus a theatre in which marionettes move about, their strings pulled by skilled manipulators in the wings.

(h) The state as such is not responsible for war and its extreme violence. It does not seek war but is dragged into it by the obscure forces that manipulate the world. Nevertheless, once war has begun, all must stand up to be counted and fight to the death.

The relation to the state dramatized in *The Thirty-Nine Steps* is, as we have seen, fairly ambiguous. The state is presented as sacred in principle, but it proves fallible and uncertain. In the nation-state pairing, the nation wins out over the state, as is always the case in periods during which a nationalist critique of a parliamentary and democratic regime asserts itself. The nation, embodied in Richard Hannay and in the Scottish peasants, all of a piece, whom Hannay chances to meet in his wanderings, is powerful. But the state is weak. Its weakness is manifested, on a level that can be qualified as metaphysical, by its inability to make surface realities conform to the essence of reality. What passes for reality is illusory, and what is real is hidden. Thus, as we have seen, everyone can be, in reality, something other than he or she appears, and ambivalence, envisaged as the most blatant sign of modernist degeneracy, that is, of democracy, is the rule. In the face of the state's abdication, a hero who embodies the nation stands up. The spy novel, oriented in this direction, can be said to express the possibility that the nation-state pairing has broken down (as we shall see in more detail later on); it plays on the disturbance, both psychological and objective, provoked by this disjunction. It takes hold not only of the characters' minds and those of its readers (at least this is what the reading contract presupposes), but also of reality as a whole. For social reality, inseparable from the national substratum, or what may be called *society*, is then no longer inhabited or protected by the state, which is revealed not only as a useless parasite but even, if this logic is pushed to the extreme, as a sort of internal enemy.

In relation to this disturbed and disturbing situation, the positive effect of war – the open war that comes to take the place of the hidden war – is to make ambivalence impossible. Facing combat, every man reveals himself for what he really is, a hero or a coward, a patriot or a traitor. The warrior's moment is the decisive one in which the bound-

ary between friends and enemies, either external or internal, becomes clear and thus, if we are to believe Carl Schmitt, the very moment of political determination (Schmitt 2005 [1922]). War, during which efforts are concentrated on defending the territory, closes the borders.

The question of borders, of the relation between a territory bounded by borders and what the borders determine to be external, is central here. The nation-state has meaning only to the extent that the state proves capable of sustaining its claim to constitute and represent a unified nation, that is, a nation in which each patch of land and each inhabitant are subject to the same principle of reality. Now, the internal enemies, agents from the outside against whom Hannay carries on an unequal and almost single-handed struggle, are located at the point where inside and outside are indistinguishable. Indeed, the internal reality – the one that is supposed to be guaranteed by the state – and the state itself are undermined, upset and consumed by forces both internal and external that deploy their power ceaselessly and in secret.

John Buchan's implicit sociology

How are we to read a novel like *The Thirty-Nine Steps?* In what register? To what extent is it to be taken seriously? Taken at face value, the story we are told is manifestly designed to be entertaining. It is quite obviously presented as a *fiction*: it features exceptional, implausible situations that can only be intended to entertain its readers, that is, to draw them away from the tensions that inhabit reality, especially at the fraught historical moment marked by the beginnings of the First World War. Still, as we have seen, one can also read the book with an eye to working out its underlying political metaphysics. Its ambiguous position, at the crossroads between the imaginary – which has no consequences – and the political – which has the potential to be realized, with undeniable consequences – is a feature specific to the literary genres that interest us here. It offers them the possibility of setting up symbolic universes that tend, after the fashion of allegories, to surmount the difference between illusion and truth. And it is precisely their capacity to arouse mental states suspended between belief and incredulity that allows them to bring into play with full impunity, as it were, political and social tensions whose deployment might well arouse suspicions and objections if they were exposed in an argumentative register, demanding justification and explicitly inciting a shift into action.

To take John Buchan's implicit sociology seriously, it may suffice to juxtapose it - in a way that will certainly seem excessive - to the explicit sociology associated with Hitler and the core group of Nazi leaders, as reported by Florent Brayard in the work he devoted to the categories and justifications that accompanied the decision to take the 'final solution' to its ultimate conclusion (Brayard 2006). The Führer had forged a conception of society that resulted from his ruminations on the German defeat in 1918 and on the role played by the Spartacist movement in that failure. But this 'vision' of the social world, whose 'prophetic' character was vaunted by the regime's propaganda, was in fact in no way original, as was the case with most of the 'ideas' that the Nazis pushed to their outer limits. These ideas resulted from a sort of patchwork produced by the leading National-Socialist circles or by Hitler himself, a 'bulimic' reader of a multitude of works – essays or fiction from the late nineteenth century on – devoted to the themes of social Darwinism, eugenicism, racial warfare, anti-Semitism, the misdeeds of high-level international finance, the need for living space, the heroic and solitary leader confronting the passivity of the masses and so on. As one can easily imagine, Hitler was not the only reader of this sort of book. In their numerous variants, these texts were invading bookstores all over Europe, and their repetitive character ended up conferring a sort of self-evidence on the fears they provoked and the remedies they proposed, so that it was not even necessary to subscribe to them completely in order to find oneself trapped in the space of discussion that they tended to set up and close off.

Florent Brayard thus shows that, according to Hitler, society was divided into three groups. A minority of 'idealists'; a majority of 'cowardly and apathetic' individuals; and a minority of 'negativists' lumped together with criminals that constituted an 'enemy from within', 'multiform and hard to grasp' (Brayard 2006: 468). The political duty of the leader, as the ultimate guarantor of social justice, was thus to maintain a numerical equilibrium between 'idealists' and 'negativists'. Now, this duty took on particular urgency in wartime: 'What in peacetime may be a harmless misdemeanor can be, in wartime, a crime against the state.'8 Since the idealists get themselves killed by the hundreds of thousands on the battlefield, an equal number of negativists - anarchists, communists, and above all Jews, who make up 'the most obvious component' of this group (ibid.) – had to be destroyed so as to limit the power these negativists could exercise over the passive masses and to keep them from inciting the masses to revolt. In this political construction, the Führer's role was not unlike the role attributed to the solitary hero in spy fiction.

The destiny of the nation depended on him, and him alone, at a critical moment in history when the nation was threatened by 'internal poisoning' and 'poisoning by foreigners' and when, facing a 'mortal danger', it was 'engaged in mortal combat for its being or nonbeing'. It follows that the leader's authority does not derive from 'formal law'; instead, it founds an 'essential law', according to the terms of an article written by Carl Schmitt to justify 'the Night of the Long Knives': 'It is in extreme urgency that the law proves itself, and that the highest degree of avenging realization of this right by a judge is manifested. Every law has its origin in the right to life of a people.' This essential law is justified by its 'goal': 'The defence of society, that is, against internal or external enemies, declared or hidden enemies, current or future enemies.'

The locus of power

Buchan's implicit sociology was hardly unique to him, as one can imagine. This writer, whose intellectual ambitions were modest, was echoing a disquietude that touched all western countries in the first third of the twentieth century, especially those that proclaimed their allegiance to a democratic ideal. This uneasiness was aroused by uncertainty about the locus of power and the foundations of authority. At issue were not only questions about where power resided, who held it and who had the legitimate authority required to use it, but also how to identify the relevant individual or collective entities to which one could attribute the power to give meaning to historical and sociological events by interpreting them in the logic of causality. Who and/or what was at work in contemporary history? States and their leaders? Bankers and capitalism? The dominant class and the bourgeoisie? The international proletariat? The Jews? The anarchists and the socialists? The envious and evil-doing rival foreign powers? Or was it modernity as a whole? Who was responsible for poverty, inequality, war (and especially the First World War), for selfishness, amorality, demoralization? For the loss of a sense of the common interest, and, further, for the loss of a moral sense, and even of common sense?

At the heart of this uncertainty, which tended to spread into the remotest corners of social life, one finds in particular a question about the real ties between the state, the nation, the people, the territory, and that other proliferating entity, at once very abstract and very concrete, that had been designated by the term 'capitalism' since the

nineteenth century. The entities we call states are indeed the ones that claim, through the voices of those that govern them, to be the legitimate sites of power. But do these governors really govern, or are they merely marionettes manipulated, with or without their knowledge. by more powerful forces in the wings? These questions converge on the issue of conspiracy. To answer them, one would have to be in a position to identify the participants in these manipulating forces and to specify the nature of the bonds of solidarity that make various individuals, geographically dispersed, act as one man. Now, the question of the nature and composition of social bonds is at the heart of the problematics of conspiracy. In the broad and quasi-metaphorical sense I am giving it here, this problematics entails, above all, bonds whose most general characteristic is not simply their clandestine nature. The term 'conspiracy' covers every kind of social bond whose force field traces the contours, however fuzzy, of a whole that does not correspond to an entity explicitly recognized by law, publicly declared and thereby endowed with an official character.

Reality, when it holds together, presents itself first and foremost as a system of pre-established causalities that makes it possible to predict events, or at least to account for them. However, reality finds itself disturbed and even undone in the face of a series of unfortunate events, situations (such as unrelenting poverty) or catastrophes, national catastrophes that can no longer be explained simply in terms of the causal factors recognized as valid for a given population on a given territory. A gulf is then created between the predictions and explanations supplied by the authorities and what is happening in fact, between the official descriptions and the unofficial versions of the stories that permeate the framework of reality and distort it. And it is indeed this gulf between ordinary causality and extraordinary phenomena that is filled by the interpretation according to which there is, lurking under the official, false power, another power that is real but hidden. The causes of what happens are not to be sought in surface reality. They lie elsewhere.

State and nation, people and capitalism

This uncertainty about the site of power is bound up with the intersection between the state's ambitions to organize reality and the disaggregating effects on traditional communities and social bonds that are brought about by the concomitant development of capitalism. In this regard, uncertainty about where power lies leads to a question

about the relation between the state and the nation or, put differently, between the governing and/or financial elites and ordinary people. In the period that interests us, the answer to this question essentially took two forms: the first, on the left, was revolutionary and internationalist, while the second, on the right, was revolutionary - in Zeev Sternhell's words (1997 [1978]) - and nationalist. Both challenged capitalism as an enemy of the people, one most often embodied in fiction by the figure of the Magnate, a banker or an industrialist who owns big companies, often specializing in weapons manufacture. But the two groups differed both in what they meant by 'people' and in the way they conceived of the 'enemies of the people', entities associated with capitalism that hold real power outside the state but also, parasitically, inside it as well. With respect to the official power held by the state and legitimized by law, these nefarious extra-legal associations are tacit, even occult. Those who act within them or to their benefit either deny their existence or remain unaware of them, so that a meticulous and often dangerous work of disclosure is required to bring them out of the shadows.

The challenge to the autonomy of the state that was developed by the revolutionary left gave rise, between the end of the nineteenth century and the first third of the twentieth, to an abundant theoretical and political literature, and also to an abundance of novels. In this fiction, the term 'people' designates the proletariat, while real power lies in the hands not of the state but of the dominant or 'ruling' class, which exploits the people and appropriates state power to its own ends. Behind the ruling elites, supposedly attached to a quest for the common good, and also behind the 'competents', as they were known in the nineteenth century, deserving and responsible men of talent, charitable personalities devoted to a cause (lawvers and judges, professors, priests, administrators and the like), the holders of economic power - the capitalists - are concealed. In attenuated forms, this thematics underlies a large number of Victorian novels, whose critical bent is sometimes associated with sentimentality (as in the work of Charles Dickens¹¹) and sometimes with irony (as in the case of Samuel Butler¹²). It finds properly revolutionary modes of expression in the first third of the nineteenth century, in works whose realism often lies at the borderline between fiction, journalistic reporting and first-hand testimony.

One particularly well-known example can be found in Jack London's work. London published a number of novels, but also political texts and journalistic accounts denouncing the poverty and exploitation of the lower classes. For example, the concluding chapter

of The People of the Abyss (1903), a sort of ethnology of the poorest districts in London's East End, is titled 'The Management'. London challenges the 'political machine known as the British Empire' and the 'management' that occupies its command posts and that has 'grossly and criminally mismanaged', leading the Empire to the brink of disaster (ibid.: 316). The author characterizes the members of this 'managing class' (317), 'the 400,000 English gentlemen. "of no occupation", according to their own statement in the Census of 1881' (315), as virtual criminals of whom not one can 'plead not guilty before the judgment bar of Man' (317): 'The food this managing class eats, the wine it drinks, the shows it makes, and the fine clothes it wears, are challenged by eight million mouths which have never had enough to fill them, and by twice eight million bodies which have never been sufficiently clothed and housed' (ibid.). London often featured the class struggle in his novels (especially, in allegorical fashion, in The Mutiny of the Elsinore [1914]), but he did not use the form of the spy novel, although he came close in an unfinished text, The Assassination Bureau, Ltd. (we shall come back to this story, as it occupies a special place in the espionage genre). And it was not until the later 1930s, especially with Eric Ambler's work (which we shall examine shortly), that the thematics of the spy novel in the form Buchan gave it was taken up again from the standpoint of the left.

In the classic spy novel, we can see one manifestation, among many others, of the way the revolutionary right appropriated and transformed the left-wing critique of the state. In this version, the term 'people' no longer refers to the lower classes or the proletariat but instead designates the nation. The adversaries of 'the people' are, on one side, the capitalists, as in the critique from the left, and on the other, the socialist and anarchist revolutionaries, presented as secretly associated with the capitalists that they pretend to combat. The enemy is also, at least implicitly, the liberal state, deemed incapable, owing to its incompetence, of providing a framework for capitalism that would prevent it from harming the common good; its naive and culpable complacency plays into the hands of the subversive internationalist forces that undermine the nation.

Thus we find in confrontation not only two accusations of conspiracy but also two counter-accusations that, responding to the first two, call into question the adversary's illusory belief in the existence of a conspiracy mounted against 'the people', a collective entity understood on the one hand as the exploited lower classes – the proletariat – and on the other as the nation. To the accusation, interpreted in the logic of conspiracy, that those who make up the elites of the nation

are in fact merely a ruling class whose members divide up the state in order to exploit the people, espionage fiction – in its original form - responds by revealing an inverse and symmetrical conspiracy: the one that the international anarchists foment, in a secret agreement with international capitalism, while pretending to be its enemies, in order to take over the state and cut it off from the nation. While the assimilation of the elites to a conspiracy is a lie, the anarcho-capitalist conspiracy is – according to this literature – quite real, as attested by the convergence of the destructive effects of capitalism and the anarchist violence that, in promoting class struggle, divides the nation against itself. Capitalists and anarchists, defenders and opponents of the liberal order, are thus bound by a shared secret passion that is nothing other than nihilism, that is, the negation of national values. While the capitalists know only the value of money, the anarchists and their socialist allies proclaim universal values, which, in the absence of any solid roots, are only illusions with criminal effects. There is nothing real that can be subsumed under the purely formal category of 'proletariat', and still less under the vindictive label 'ruling class'. The kind of solidarity that the revolutionary left imputes to the 'ruling class' or to the 'bourgeoisie' is thus non-existent. It is by way of a pernicious abstraction that something like 'class solidarity' can be identified among people who do not know each other personally, who do not belong to the same family, who do not live in the same place and who have very little in common (except that they belong to the same nation) – for example, the owner of a business, a doctor, a philosopher and a judge. There are only individual persons, each with an individual character, individual difficulties, likes and dislikes, flaws and virtues.

These potentially criminal illusions are countered by the simplicity and the *authenticity* of the hero. Only those who have remained close to their roots can prevail. These are, without distinction, simple and humble folk – like the farmers and shepherds lost on their desolate moors – and solid, all-of-a-piece personalities who make up the nation's true elites. The fact that the former are poor and subordinate, the latter rich and dominant, is treated here as an irrelevant detail. They are all cut from the same cloth, and they act together when duty calls. Under the appearance of fictions designed solely to entertain, *The Thirty-Nine Steps* and similar works thus do have a critical dimension since they unveil and denounce, explicitly, the nation's enemies and, implicitly, the state that has abdicated its responsibilities. But the critical position adopted has a specular character. It is the critique of a critique.

The Jewish question

In *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, Scudder's geopolitical exposé concludes with the remark (omitted from the French translation) that 'the Jew was behind it'. Let us note that this statement might remain enigmatic; lengthy explanations are not required for a claim that went without saying for most readers of the period. Through Scudder, Buchan nevertheless undertook (in a passage also omitted from the French edition) to clarify the meaning of the assertion through a metaphor:

The Jew is everywhere, but you have to go far down the backstairs to find him. Take any big Teutonic business concern. If you have dealings with it the first man you meet is Prince von und Zu Something, an elegant young man who talks Eton-and-Harrow English. But he cuts no ice. If your business is big, you get behind him and find a prognathous Westphalian with a retreating brow and the manners of a hog. But if you're on the biggest kind of job and are bound to get to the real boss, ten to one you are brought up against a little white-faced Jew in a bathchair with an eye like a rattlesnake. Yes, Sir, he is the man who is ruling the world just now. (Buchan 1993 [1915]: 8)

Thus even the German enemy is not truly responsible for the Great War which is about to break out at the end of the book, for the real and hidden power belongs to the Jews.

In the political metaphysics of the revolutionary right, the Jews embodied a tension - of which the antagonism between capitalism and the nation-state was only one manifestation among others – that permeated the relation between flow and territory. On the same basis as capitalism, and even in the instances where they were poor and possessed nothing, the Jews were perceived as part of the flow that intervened to thwart and pervert territorial logic, that is, national identity. The Jews thus constituted the most striking embodiment of the adversary, not only because they were fundamentally stateless, even when a state took the risk of granting them citizenship, but also because it was among their ranks that bankers were recruited on the one hand, anarchists and socialists on the other. The splitting of reality between an apparent but false form and a concealed but real form found its most striking expression in the Jews. They were at once citizens and stateless, rich bankers and poor anarchists.¹³ Like the criminals in detective fiction, dissimulated under the outward appearance of perfectly harmless beings, or like the agents in spy novels, hiding under the identity of respectable citizens, they could abruptly change form in response to the gaze directed towards them,

a gaze that was misled at first but then suddenly became lucid. In this way, Jews embodied *ambivalence*, as Zigmunt Bauman has shown (1993), ambivalence being considered the disease of modernity.

'Iew' is thus the name given to whatever could not submit to the national bent, not only because there were Iews in all European nations and in the United States, but especially because, for the revolutionary right, their Judaic identity always won out over national identity. The bonds they wove with one another were construed as an immense canvas that spread like a spiderweb (an image often used in anti-Semitic caricatures) throughout the nations and threatened their integrity. Beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Iews were accused of embodying a form of bond that was neither legally constituted, in the mode of citizenship, nor associated with the traditions of a particular territory. Thus they posed an insoluble problem for nation-states, a problem known as the *Jewish question*. Neither natural nor juridical, the type of relations woven among Jews was always classified by the revolutionary right under the conspiracy form. Jews were even the embodiment of that form and became its symbol.

Indeed, the dominant lovalty imputed to Jews always had Jewishness as its object, so much so that any generous and democratic project that proposed to integrate them was necessarily condemned to fail. For the fact of their integration would become obvious only if they agreed to renounce the name of Jew and the forms of bonding it presupposed. It would then no longer be a matter of integrating Jews but just ordinary persons, persons 'without qualities', as it were. But if, on the contrary, the Iews stubbornly persisted in calling themselves Jews, their integration would be only illusory (Alexander 2006: 459-500). This is why the Jews, and especially the best integrated among them - which meant, generally speaking, the wealthiest or the best educated – were the internal enemies par excellence. They were ambivalence itself, the duck/rabbit whose form changed depending on the angle from which it was viewed, the disturbing uncanniness that made blatant the failure of the effort to put in place a reality that would hold together: that is, a society, a truly existent entity composed of a plurality of human beings but nevertheless possessing a clearly marked, well-tempered national character, a being that was all of a piece. It must also be said that those to whom the name of Iew had been attributed, and even those who claimed it, subscribed in some numbers to an odd project that was inseparable from the idea of integration: the idea that the status of Jew could be made to exist even while being fully absorbed, so that it would have the

tenor of beneficent molecules in homeopathic remedies. The memory of Jewishness was to be maintained in spite of everything, like the memory of water.

But this was to blind oneself to the fact that the name 'Iew' had been charged, during the rise in power of nation-states on the one hand and capitalism on the other - simultaneous antagonists and accomplices – with an extension and a polysemy such that it could be attributed to almost anyone or anything (in French, for example, by applying the participial form *enjuivé* to indicate that someone or something had taken on the qualities of a Jew; this was a frequent practice in anti-Semitic literature). Designating everything that made manifest the ambivalence of national-capitalist modernity as it was deployed in liberal democracies, as well as in traditionalist authoritarian states in their tense resistance to 'liberalism', the term 'Jew' was destined to spread well beyond the limits of a religion, a tradition or an ethnic group. It was the name given to everything that circulated without regard to borders, whether persons (bankers or anarchists), ideas (liberalism or socialism), or, even more generally, merchandise and money, that is, to everything that constituted a flow crossing territories and in the process annulling the efforts being made by nation-states to ensure the happiness of their peoples.

The missing mass of causality

It is clearly not a question of accusing Buchan of being anti-Semitic; he undoubtedly was, but neither more nor less than a great many of the writers of his time. ¹⁴ The very structure of the type of narrative he established requires that the actors, or rather the factors, on which the *missing mass of causality* depends (the causality without which events become incomprehensible and absurd) be named, identified and hunted down. This is the case whatever name is given, at a particular moment in history, to this absent causality – let us call it dark causality, as we would speak of dark matter.

Buchan was a man of right-wing tendencies and a member of the establishment (he ended his career as viceroy of Canada, after serving in Parliament and, briefly, in the Intelligence Service); writing his book in wartime, with an obvious intent to produce patriotic propaganda, he invented nothing, at least on the level of ideological formations. He was content to introduce into the adventure-novel genre a political trope that had appeared in the last third of the nineteenth century and was to meet with great success in the first half of the twentieth,

especially in the 1930s. The 1929 crisis and the inability of nationstates to get its effects under control gave weight to the idea that the official leaders were only impotent marionettes in the face of the real but hidden power of those who pulled the strings of capitalism, or else that these leaders were merely delegates and accomplices of the capitalist masters. An assumption of this sort can circulate from right to left. However, while on the left it has to take into account the internationalist values of at least a segment of the workers' movement, this way of looking at the world constitutes a central element in the beliefs shared by movements that identified both with capitalism and with nationalism, as was the case with fascism, and, to a certain extent, with Nazism (whose ideological core was less nationalistic than racial). Declaring that they had transcended the left-right division, these movements could also bring into convergence, in the figure of the enemy, two forces that were seemingly in conflict: capital and the adversaries of capitalism.

The idea that the integrity of peoples and nations was threatened by vast conspiracies devised by more or less secret collectives whose members were spread out among various countries, especially enemy countries, thus accompanied both the formation of nationalism and the developments aimed at revealing the causes of revolutions as well as the harmful effects of modernity (including capitalism). The collectives occupying the position of invisible enemy have been quite varied, historically: first the Jesuits, in the eighteenth century, then most notably the Illuminati of Bavaria, the Freemasons, the intellectuals of the Enlightenment, and so on. These assorted entities had in common an alleged indifference to national loyalties. In countries where nationalism was associated with Catholicism (as in France, with Gallicanism), the anti-clericalism imputed to Freemasonry was treated as an anti-national tendency. The history of these historicoideological constructions, in which the Abbé Barruel (himself a Jesuit) played a pioneering role, with his Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire du jacobinisme (1818), is well documented today.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Jews occupied a central position in these constructions. In them was embodied, as we have seen, the entire set of forces reputed to be stateless: on one side, the forces of money (symbolized by the Rothschilds), which circulated without constraints among the territories of the nation-states, and, on the other, the internationalist revolutionary forces (Marx) that exported social revolution – conceived as an extreme limit of liberal pathology – from country to country.

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion

The text known as The Protocols of the Elders of Zion played an important role in the jumble of sordid stories – from the most extravagant fiction to the rawest, most tragic reality – that contributed to the formation of European subjectivities at the dawn of the twentieth century, a process whose diverse strands I am attempting to pull together here. This text is presented as an account of secret meetings between Jews and Masons (aimed at a universal Israelite alliance) during which an 'Elder of Zion' addressed the leaders of the Iewish people and revealed to them a secret plan for world domination, after the destruction of Christian civilization. This plan included the use of deception, war, revolution and capitalism. The Protocols is pertinent to our topic in several respects. For one thing, it constitutes significant evidence of European anti-Semitism, of which it was a product but which it also helped justify and spread, to the point of playing a notorious role in the slippage from the ideology of eradication to the enactment of that ideology in an attempt to destroy the Jews of Europe. In addition, we may suppose – without being able to prove - that it was one of the sources of Scudder's narrative as related by Buchan, or at least that Buchan was echoing a widespread thematics of which *The Protocols* was one of the most systematic formulations.

But the centrality of *The Protocols* for our purposes does not stop here. This document is also at the core of the cluster of problems that grew up around the question of conspiracy, which occupied for over a century, as we shall see, and perhaps still occupies, a central position in ideological disputes and debates among social scientists. The Protocols is connected with that question, first, owing to the simple fact that it claims to unveil a worldwide conspiracy, that of the Jews, and the consequences of this supposed unveiling are all too well known. But it is also connected in a less direct way. When a trend developed in the social sciences some fifty years later (we shall examine its genesis shortly) aimed at studying that document while also, most often, denouncing its harmful effects, The Protocols was viewed as the most manifest example of a conspiracy theory. It came to occupy the central position in that category; it was often invoked by political scientists but also by ordinary persons; it came to symbolize conspiracy theories in general, as it were. It follows that a number of other beliefs, whatever their tenor, identified and denounced from then on by commentators who qualified them as conspiracy theories, found themselves affected, at least implicitly, by the opprobrium that had rightly been cast on The Protocols.

Let us note, finally, that when historians set out to reconstitute the fabrication and trajectory of *The Protocols*, they were led to the heart of mechanisms for policing and espionage set up by European countries – Russia and France in particular – at the end of the nineteenth century and during the twentieth. On this basis, *The Protocols* can quite legitimately be viewed as *the result of a conspiracy*, so that, in this case at least, the recourse to explanations like those invoked by constructions characterized as conspiracy theories is well founded. As for the history of this historical reconstruction itself, ¹⁵ which is still being relentlessly pursued today, we may imagine that it would easily find a place in a breathless example of investigative journalism, or even in a spy novel. The story is so well documented and well known that it can be recalled quite briefly here.

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion was a hoax produced in Paris in 1897 or 1898. It was written in French by an activist anti-Semite (identified by the Russian historian Mikhail Lepekhin as the publicist Mathieu Golovinski) working for an agent of the Czarist Russian secret police – Okhrana – who lived in Paris (Pyotr Ivanovich Rachkovsky). Or it may have been written, as Carlo Ginzburg suggests, by or with the complicity of Édouard Drumont (Ginzburg 2012: 151–64). It was translated into Russian and published for the first time in Russia in 1905 by the orthodox 'mystic' Serge Nilus, who was close to Nicholas II. The text was widely disseminated throughout Russia, where it was used in support of the anti-Semitic policies promoted by the state with the support of reactionary milieus and Orthodox elites. Its spread probably provided ideological support for the numerous pogroms that took place during that period. According to Norman Cohn, a precursor of the historians of *The Protocols*, this hoax was not the first of its kind. It had been preceded in 1869 by the publication in Russia of The Book of the Kahal, a hoax in which the author - Jacob Brafmann, a Jew converted to Russian Orthodoxy claimed to have discovered accounts of secret meetings of the Jewish community revealing that the kahal (the community council) 'in each town aimed at enabling Jewish traders to oust their Christian competitors and in the end to acquire possession of all the property of the Christians' (Cohn 1967: 54). This work, published at government expense, was distributed to Russian civil servants. Several works of the same type followed. More generally, the articles and works denouncing a worldwide Jewish conspiracy and unveiling a secret government in the hands of Jewish secret societies proliferated in the late nineteenth century throughout much of Europe: in Russia, but also in France and Germany (ibid.: 39-40). The Protocols would

probably not have been greeted with so little discernment had not the principal themes, of which it offered a particularly absurd version, already been implanted in the ideological sphere of the European bourgeoisies.

However, it was not until the 1920s that The Protocols took on a truly international dimension. During that period, the work was translated into a number of languages; it migrated to most European countries, including England, France (where Grasset published it in 1921), and especially Germany, where it constituted one of the chief arguments in support of the plan to destroy the Jews of Europe that was conceived and then put into practice by the Nazis. The degree of credit granted to this text can be measured if we recall that it was published in Great Britain under the title The Jewish Peril and cited as a source worthy of consideration by the Times of London on 8 May 1920 in an article titled 'A Disturbing Pamphlet: A Call for Enquiry' (Segel 1996: xii). The following year, the Times published a refutation written by Philip Graves, the paper's correspondent in Constantinople; the article inaugurated research efforts to reveal the origin and establish the traceability of this hoax. Graves observed that the main arguments attributed to the purported leaders of the international Jewish conspiracy had in fact been borrowed from a pamphlet he had come across that accused Napoleon III of plotting to seize total power (Graves had a Russian émigré friend who had purchased an odd lot of old books from another refugee in Constantinople, a former Okhrana officer). This pamphlet, titled Dialogue between Machiavelli and Montesquieu in Hell, had been published anonymously in Brussels in 1864 by a republican, the French lawyer Maurice Joly, then smuggled into France, probably by police informers among others (Joly 2002 [1864]). Virtually all copies of this work were subsequently seized by the police and destroyed. The author was identified, arrested and sent to the Sainte-Pélagie prison, where he remained until 1867. After 1871, Maurice Joly sought to reconnect with the republicans, in particular with the Péreire brothers (who gave him space in their newspaper, La Liberté) and with Jules Grévy; he later fell out with them and, after several challenges to duels, was condemned to silence. The *Dialogue* and its talented, bellicose author were totally forgotten.

Prompted by Philip Graves, researchers at the British Museum found a copy of the clandestine edition of the *Dialogue*, and correspondences between elements in the two texts allowed them to establish conclusively that the authors of *The Protocols* had borrowed extensively from the *Dialogue*. The similarities were all the

more convincing in that they often involved details, for example, a reference to 'the [Hindu] god Vishnu' (Joly 2002 [1864]: 70), in keeping with the paradigm of the clue brought to light by Carlo Ginzburg when he juxtaposed the art historian Morelli with the discovery of psychoanalysis (1989 [1979]). The likeness between the two texts is especially striking when one examines the arguments attributed to Machiavelli, who is the spokesperson for Napoleon III in the Dialogue. The most interesting of these arguments for our purposes defend the idea that access to total domination depends on the ability to manipulate financial forces and revolutionary forces simultaneously, so as to turn these seeming opposites in the same direction: towards war. Thus Machiavelli declares, for example: '[A] simple change of a regulation would allow me to bring into existence immense monopolies. The fate of all private fortunes would become completely dependent on these vast reservoirs of public wealth. They could be taken over on the credit side of the state the day after my political catastrophe' (Joly 2002 [1864]: 39). This statement reappears in *The Protocols* in the following form: 'We shall soon begin to establish huge monopolies, reservoirs of colossal riches, upon which even large fortunes of the GOYIM will depend to such an extent that they will go to the bottom together with the credit of the States on the day after the political smash . . . ' (Protocol VI: 1). As for manipulating the revolutionaries in order to take power, Joly describes the process, through Machiavelli, in these terms:

As for foreign policy, revolutionary ferment, which is suppressed in one's own country, should be incited throughout Europe. Two important advantages result. The turmoil bred of liberalism abroad will excuse its repression at home. Moreover, because you can easily promote either order or chaos in foreign countries, you will command their respect. The main thing is to infiltrate the seats of power and foment cabinet intrigues. In this way, European politics becomes so entangled that you can manipulate, by turns, any country with which you deal. (Joly 2002 [1864]: 40)

Machiavelli expresses his governing idea in a formula that Scudder would not disavow: 'To sum up the whole scheme: within the state revolution is contained by the fear of anarchy, bankruptcy, and more generally, by general war' (41). It is this formula, designed to depict Napoleon III's power in an ironic form, that *The Protocols* later attributed to Jews. Similarly, in *The Protocols* an elder advises the Jews to establish official representations of the world so as to dissimulate reality; in the *Dialogue*, Machiavelli says: 'But in what is today

called *official language*, a strikingly different approach must be taken. Here, you cannot affect too great a display of the spirit of integrity and goodwill. Given that people see only the surface of things, the sovereign who knows how to act in this way will gain a reputation for probity' (40–1). And Machiavelli/Joly adds:

As you see, I have in mind an idea of power that is far from barbaric. On the contrary, power must draw to itself all the strengths and talents of that civilization where it finds itself. It must surround itself with journalists, lawyers, administrators, and men of experience, with people who know all the hidden mysteries, all the essential springs of social life, people who can speak all languages and who have studied man in all situations. They must be recruited wherever they are found, for these people perform extraordinary services by virtue of the ingenious ways they apply their talents to politics. In addition, it must have a multitude of economists, bankers, industrialists, capitalists, planners, millionaires, for everything ultimately can be reduced to numbers. (Joly 2002 [1864]: 41)

It is thus this pamphlet describing the power structure set up by Napoleon III in France that was revisited thirty years later and universalized, with Iews and their secret societies in place of the Emperor and the planet in place of France. The economic and social consequences of what the historians of capitalism have called the first globalization - which was currently under way, with the attendant crises, unemployment, poverty and corruption - unquestionably constituted favourable ground for the reinforcement of nationalism and the spread of conceptions of history based on the unveiling of a worldwide plot. These conceptions exonerated nation-states and their nationalist bourgeoisies of any responsibility for the misfortunes of the time; these misfortunes were attributed to the actions of omnipotent subterranean forces, apparently composite but in fact united, operating unbeknownst to or with the complicity of the official leadership. This is precisely the conception of history that Scudder describes to Richard Hannay at the beginning of The Thirty-Nine Steps. At first incredulous, Hannay becomes convinced of its accuracy through the events he witnesses before inadvertently becoming one of its actors.

The reversal

Setting aside *The Thirty-Nine Steps* for a moment, let us turn to another spy novel written twenty-five years later, Eric Ambler's

Background to Danger (1941). This novel – the last of the six Ambler wrote between 1936 and 1940 - is of interest because it can be read as a sort of inverted reproduction of *The Thirty-Nine Steps*. ¹⁶ The framework and actantial structure of the narrative are maintained with great precision. But the distribution of the actants is profoundly transformed. The reversal was intentional on Ambler's part: 'I looked around for something I could change and decided it was the thriller-espionage story. I decided to turn that upside down and make the heroes left wing and popular front figures' (Woods 2008: 61). Ambler, a socialist living in Paris who experienced the Popular Front first-hand, meant to transform the genre both on the literary and political levels, by dramatizing the struggles that were tearing Europe apart and approaching them from a left-wing standpoint. A conspiracy is still the focal point of each story; at its heart, we still find industrial magnates and bankers as embodiments of capitalism. But unlike the bankers' associates depicted in Buchan's novel, those in Ambler's books are no longer socialists, anarchists, stateless persons or Jews. Instead, they are nationalists, fascists and, more generally, members of the dominant elites, those that collectively constitute what can be called a ruling class. Thus, practically for the first time, we find spy novels explicitly featuring the other accusation of conspiracy, the one articulated by the revolutionary left that denounces the connivance between the bourgeoisie, the elites and 'big capital'. By the same token, this reversal unveils the reactionary character of the conspiracy charges on which the works we have examined up to now are based.

Here, in sum, is the story Eric Ambler tells. An oil company, Pan-Eurasian Petroleum, is at the centre of an international network of London-based banks whose members belong to the English ruling class and to the gentry (for example, Lord Welterfield, a millionaire who owns coal mines and is a patron of sporting events). Balterghen, the man who runs this network, is president of Pan-Eurasian Petroleum and of some fifteen other businesses, and he administers three dozen more; he is 'a big man in the City of London' (Ambler 1941: 83). The author hints that he has Middle Eastern origins (his secretary hears him speak in a language that seems to be 'a cross between Russian and Italian' [7]). He divides his time between his Rolls-Royce and his office, which is described as resembling 'a harlot's parlour' (3) because it is filled with costly objects in poor taste. Balterghen has a henchman, Colonel Robinson, who is English in name only. He is actually a certain Saridza, an agent provocateur, seconded by the sadistic killer Captain Mailler, a former policeman

with the British Special Forces in Ireland. At the beginning of the novel, Balterghen calls a meeting of the Pan-Eurasian Petroleum Company board to inform its members of his concerns. Italy needs oil from Rumania in order to pursue its weapons program. Balterghen puts pressure on the Rumanian government to get Parliament to pass laws that will reopen Pan-Eurasian's former Rumanian concessions for exploitation. However, the vote is delayed because of an article published in a socialist newspaper ("Reds!" said Lord Welterfield violently' [6]). This article, titled 'The Vultures Gather', denounces the 'capitalist exploiters' and the corruption that is raging in the capital (ibid.). The novel's hero, Kenton, is a freelance journalist; he is English, but his mother is French and his father came from Northern Ireland. He could be taken for an 'American'. After heavy gambling losses, a penniless Kenton leaves Nuremberg for Vienna, where he hopes to find money; in the train he meets a man – Herr Sachs – who represents himself as a German Iew and says he is being pursued. This man entrusts him with an envelope, for a significant sum, and asks him to drop it off at a hotel in Linz. Herr Sachs is murdered. Kenton is accused of the crime. He then meets two Soviet agents, Zaleshoff and his sister Tamara, who are trying to get the envelope back. The envelope contains obsolete secret plans for an invasion of Bessarabia; if these plans were discovered, they would play into the hands of the Pan-Eurasian Company. Sachs, a former communist agent who has betrayed the cause, was preparing to turn the plans over to the Pan-Eurasian directors. Kenton finds himself pursued both by the henchmen working for Pan-Eurasian and by the police, who are after him for murdering Sachs. He makes common cause with Zaleshoff and Tamara, who, after numerous perilous adventures, manage to save him from the clutches of the infamous Colonel Robinson and to retrieve the envelope, whose contents they destroy.

The similarities with *The Thirty-Nine Steps* are blatant. The hero is a young man alone, on the cusp of adulthood. He is thrust in spite of himself and by chance into an affair that is way over his head, and he takes on a cause of major political importance at the risk of his life, without being commissioned to do so by any nation-state. The fate of entire countries depends on his action; they risk being plunged into disastrous conflicts (the First World War in *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, the Second World War in *Background to Danger*). The hero discovers a vast conspiracy and a parallel world. He grapples with an international secret society that is ready to do anything to achieve its goals: 'Fascism in Italy, National-Socialism in Germany, the Croix de Feu in France, Rexism in Belgium . . . Even in England the symptoms

are apparent in the rising power of bureaucracy' (83). His adversaries change identity constantly, so that he never really knows who he is dealing with, friend or foe (even the horrible Colonel Robinson, in his tweed suit, looks exactly like a respectable landowner). Kenton acts spontaneously, motivated by moral principles and solidarities that are in some sense ingrained in him. He is hunted down both by the official police of various nation-states and by agents of the conspiracy whose plans he is thwarting.

Similarly, we note that the political metaphysics underlying the narratives – that of two political realities, one manifest but fictitious, the other real but hidden - is common to Buchan and Ambler, 'It was the power of Business, not the deliberations of statesmen, that shaped the destinies of nations. ... it was the Big Business men, the bankers and their dependents, the arms manufacturers, the oil companies, the big industrialists, who determined what those policies should be. Big Business asked the questions that it wanted to ask when and how it suited it.' To get a real handle on the constantly shifting policies, 'one might have to inquire into banking transactions in London, Paris and New York'.... One could never be sure of anything. 'One end of the game was played in the rarefied atmosphere of board-rooms and week-end shooting parties; the other was played . . . in trains, in cheap hotels, in suburbs of big cities, in murky places . . .' (58–9). As for the members of respectable society (the true conspiracy), they use killers because they don't have the courage to do the 'dirty work' themselves. '[Your] business man ... is a kindhearted man. He likes an easy conscience. He likes to think that the people he exploits are pleased and happy to be exploited. He likes to sit in his office and deal honestly with other business men. That is why Saridza [the agitator] is necessary' (82).

Let us note, finally, that with Ambler even more than with Buchan, the state comes off badly. Undermined in Buchan's story by liberal or even crypto-socialist moles that prevent it from carrying out its mission, in Ambler's account the state is simply an accomplice and an instrument of the ruling class. While, at the end of his adventure, Hannay finds courageous personalities in the British state who help him fight the nation's enemies, this does not hold true for Kenton. The latter owes his salvation only to the action of communists, considered in this narrative not as agents of another state, the Soviet Union, but solely as free militants, authentically devoted to the cause of the people.

Just as *The Thirty-Nine Steps* can be viewed as the matrix for a number of spy novels with a nationalist inspiration, Ambler's novel

establishes a form whose transformations can be seen in a number of anti-fascist novels of the 1940s. Thus for example in Graham Greene's The Ministry of Fear, probably the best-known work of this type (Fritz Lang's film is relatively faithful to its spirit), the hero, Arthur Rowe, is lost and alone. Released from a psychiatric asylum where he has been confined for two years for administering poison, out of compassion, to his gravely ill wife, he finds himself thrust into London during the *blitzkrieg*. At a fundraising party he wins, by mistake, a cake that contains a hidden microfilm with secret plans for defending the English coasts. After surviving a murder attempt, he makes contact with the association that organized the party (the 'Free Mothers') and with its leaders, a charming Austrian refugee and his even more charming sister. Then, after a series of ups and downs, he finds himself at a séance of spiritualism organized by the demoniacal Mrs Bellairs, and he takes a place in the spirit circle, a veritable symbol of the conspiracy, since all of its members except for Rowe are Nazi spies. The lights go out. A man is killed. Rowe is accused of the murder and hunted both by the police and by the spies, whose leader is none other than the charming refugee (but, happily, unbeknownst to his charming sister) and whose showpiece is Dr Forester, an eminent psychiatrist who has penetrated the heart of the British state as an adviser to the Ministry of Home Security.

To conclude this series, let me mention one other novel, published a little later (1949). In John Gearon's *The Velvet Well*, set in New York just after the war, the hero is a militant anti-fascist who, like Arthur Rowe, has just come out of a psychiatric ward. He finds himself alone and lost; as he grapples with an international organization based in South America, a group of former Nazis trying to get hold of a suitcase containing uranium, he is accused by the police of killing the scientist from whom the suitcase had been stolen. It would be easy to find numerous additional examples of this type.

Above the conspiracy

Along with the figure of reversal, an additional figure of transformation can be found in certain spy novels. This one still involves the constitutive question of conspiracy, but it entails an attempt to escape from the alternative that requires unveiling and denouncing either a conspiracy that associates capitalism with socialists and/or anarchists (and Jews) from a nationalist standpoint, or a conspiracy that associates capitalism with the ruling class and/or international

elites from a socialist or anarchist standpoint. Such attempts thus aim to establish narrative forms that make it possible to describe reality in general as a *vast conspiracy*, and thereby to complete the transposition, in the field of literary representation, of what can be viewed as the dominant figure of political metaphysics in the twentieth century. This approach grasps reality from an elevated viewpoint intended to transcend the conflict between divergent interpretations of whatever constitutes the object of the conspiracy, the actors who participate in it and the forces that connect them. The displacement thus presupposes the construction of a position of utterance from which it is possible to take on different expressions of the accusation of conspiracy simultaneously.

We shall examine three very different forms of this operation in turn. The first, which can be considered archaic (it appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century), consists in juxtaposing various accusations of conspiracy so as to reveal their convergence. The second, which was developed primarily during the Cold War (thus some fifty years later), tends to treat the various plots symmetrically and in parallel, even though each retains a distinct character. The third, finally, aims to disengage the *conspiracy form* in its most general aspects, so it can be apprehended in itself, as it were, as a constitutive form not only of politics but of reality in general, in the service, by turns or simultaneously, of state omnipotence or capitalist hubris, within a cosmos in the grip of technology – thus a cosmos with no escape hatch, in which there is simply no possibility of eluding the influence of the conspiracy, or even of taking one's distance from it so as to objectivize it and discern its contours.

To grasp the differences between these three forms, we have to take into account the position, rarely made explicit in the stories themselves, from which the opposing conspiracies are considered and also judged. The elevated position is in fact always normative. But, in the case of the older stories, it is a position that can be qualified as radical, or extremist, or even perhaps *eschatological*. Existing reality, and the conspiracies that inhabit it, are considered from the vanishing point of a last judgement. This is probably why the earliest stories in which this possibility is exploited have the character of something like a utopia tending towards the fantastic.

The expressions of this schema that were developed during the Cold War lay claim to realism; here, the opposing conspiracies are considered from an elevated normative position that can be qualified as humanistic and/or 'liberal' (a position that we shall examine more closely in the next chapter). As the two conspiracies are described

from this position, particular attention is paid to the action of the secret services associated with the powers in conflict – the United States and its allies, and the Soviet Union and its allies. Communist conspiracies and democratic-capitalist or anti-communist conspiracies are envisaged in terms of what they have in common, but without being conflated. They are treated as though they represented two pathological deviations on the part of states in the grip of inhuman bureaucracies and invaded by equally condemnable extremists, although for different reasons and sometimes to different degrees.

The implicit normative position of the third case might be designated provisionally as nostalgia for authentic human relations, in the sense of relations capable of escaping the mediation of apparatuses and nation-states; these relations are often figured in terms of faceto-face encounters, unpredictable and happenstance meetings, loss of direction and of course, in many cases, love. It is a matter, perhaps, of an attempt – experienced as desperate – to suspend the difference between what we have called *reality* understood as *constructed*, especially through the constraint exercised by the original state formats, and the world, construed as being 'everything that happens'. The world, as it surges up by way of personal experience, and especially by way of sexuality, in the course of lives that had previously been confined within the constraining framework of reality, intervenes to shake up that framework and reveal the artificiality inherent in the conspiracies and accusations of conspiracy on which that reality rests. These narrative positions, of which we shall see some examples shortly, carve out a complicated path whose origins are not limited to the spy novel as such. The positions were formed during the period surrounding the First World War, generalized during the 1950s and 1960s, and are still developing today.

To distinguish these various attempts to take the figure of conspiracy as an object even while resisting the implacable oppositions that it presupposes and arouses, we shall speak in the first case of *specularity*, in the second of *symmetrization*, and in the third of *unveiling*.

The mirror of conspiracies

Two narratives, situated at the outer limits if not of spy fiction properly speaking then at least of the abundant literature featuring anarchists, will help us clarify the figure of *specularity*. These stories both bring forward accusations and counter-accusations of conspiracy to the point of making them coincide, as if to break up

the apparently ordered nature of reality and reveal its ambiguity and strangeness. Pushing to the limit the idea of a great conspiracy and the existence of a hidden reality underneath appearances, they set up fictional machinery that, like a Möbius strip, folds each of the accusations back over the other to the point of rendering them indistinguishable. Both G. K. Chesterton, in *The Man Who Was Thursday:* A Nightmare (1908), and Jack London, in The Assassination Bureau, Ltd. (1963), seem at first to be trying to draw the reader into a shadowy tale about an anarchist conspiracy, in keeping with the thematics established a decade or two earlier and already developed in certain novels that dramatized the dangers posed by anarchism to the social order. But the authors gradually subvert this thematics, first by presenting the struggle between the defenders of order and the troublemakers in the form of two symmetrical conspiracies. The actors on both sides dissimulate and disguise themselves in the same ways and use similar methods. Then the authors reveal that these two conspiracies – the one that seeks to destroy order and the one that means to defend order – include the same agents. The same actors are at work, under different identities, in each case. And both sides are equally powerless either to institute disorder or to defend an order that is itself only a form of disorder.

The idea of two realities and two powers – one apparent but fictitious, the other hidden but real – is thus posited only to be developed in a way that makes manifest both its truth and its absurdity. The men of order are right to expose, under the apparent order, the action of the socialist-anarchist conspiracy, and the anarchists are right to expose, under the apparent order, a vast conspiracy, that of the capitalists and the ruling class ('high society'). There is nothing, then, that can be qualified as social order, but enemies of order exist nonetheless. This demonstration, which is presented under the auspices of the most absolute scepticism since it is designed to cast suspicion on the distinction between order and disorder, avoids nihilism because it is oriented towards a vanishing point that remains implicit in the two stories: for Chesterton, the unattainable outcome is radical Christianity; for London, it is total revolution. Both narratives encompass the possibility of a normative requirement from which existing reality can be judged, and condemned, in its totality. But this normative footing cannot be described or even designated; it is so foreign to reality as reality is understood in the prevailing situation that no one can imagine the transformations of reality and the concomitant shape of morality that would follow from the incorporation of either one of these orientations into the texture of the real world,

understood in the first case through the term 'flesh', and in the second through the rhetoric of materialism. Fundamentalist Christianity and total revolution act only, for the time being, as phantom states; they are capable of supporting indignation and critique in the face of the scandal of reality, but they offer no opening towards a near future, not even one sketched in a utopian mode (Yack 1992).

Chesterton's The Man Who Was Thursday, published in 1908, can thus be envisaged as an allegory of this specular situation within which accusations of conspiracy are tossed back and forth, and there is a general belief that others are conspiring. Lucian Gregory, a poet tempted by nihilism, introduces his friend Gabriel Syme, a man of order, into the secret society to which he belongs. Syme joins the society in turn, under the name Thursday, before confiding under an oath of secrecy that he is actually a member of the police force and more precisely of the secret services, which are charged with tracking down anarchists. But Syme gradually realizes that this is also the case for the six other council members – also named after days of the week - who govern this secret society, with the exception of its mysterious president, known as Sunday. This man is known only via his voice, which is sometimes heard in a dark room; no one has ever seen him. Finally, after enrolling the other members, all of whom belong to the police, Sunday reveals that he is both the chief of police and the head of the anarchists. The set constituted by the anarchists, men of *chaos*, thus includes the same elements as the set formed by members of the police, representatives of order. Order and chaos are inseparable.

At roughly the same time, probably around 1910, Jack London set out to write *The Assassination Bureau*, a novel that he left unfinished. It was discovered among his papers after his suicide in 1916. Robert L. Fish completed the novel on the basis of London's notes. The main character is an immensely wealthy Russian, a former anarchist and disciple of Kropotkin who, after many perilous adventures, has taken on the identity of his dead brother-in-law and has gone to settle in the United States with his infant daughter Grunva, whom he passes off as his niece. This character has two identities: he is at once Sergius Constantine, head of the big Russian import firm S. Constantine & Co., and Ivan Dragomiloff, head of another business, this one secret - the Assassination Bureau, whose members are commissioned and paid to carry out murders. This second, highly efficient enterprise is organized and managed rationally, as a capitalist firm would be. But its distinctive feature is that it is subject to a strict morality, much more rigorous than the liberal morality capitalism espouses. This morality is invoked both in decisions about whether or not to kill the targets

indicated by the clients, and in managing the contractual relations that the bureau maintains with these clients. The latter are just as likely to be members of high society – for example, capitalists wanting to take revenge on an adversary who has not respected his commitments – as anarchists who want to get rid of policemen or agents of capitalist companies. Dragomiloff reproaches the anarchists for being utopian dreamers incapable of succeeding in their subversive enterprises, and for being, at bottom, too human and too weak to decide to spill blood themselves. For his part, he wants to be both a moralist and a man of action. Before agreeing to a client's request, Dragomiloff undertakes an inquiry. The target is executed only if Dragomiloff becomes convinced that this person has done something seriously wrong or that he is harmful to society. His 'niece' Grunya, now grown up, is a humanitarian socialist; the immensely rich Dragomiloff supplies the necessary funds for her benevolent actions (which he deems useless). She meets Winter Hall, and the two young people fall in love. Hall, who has inherited a respectable fortune from his parents, is also a socialist and a humanist. To acquire competencies that will allow him to manage his charitable endeavours successfully, he has taken university courses in economics and sociology. His doctrine is social pragmatism. Unaware of the connection between Grunva and Dragomiloff, he develops a plan to destroy the Assassination Bureau, whose existence he has managed to discover. Hall meets the head of the Bureau and asks him to kill someone: Dragomiloff himself. Dragomiloff agrees to his request but requires that the assassination be justified, in keeping with his self-imposed rule. Hall and Dragomiloff, both fanatically moralistic, go head-to-head in an argument over the ethics of crime. Hall finally wins. Dragomiloff admits that his assassination business is morally condemnable. But he refuses to shut down the bureau, as Hall has requested, and instead requires that the second of his rules be respected, namely, that once the contract has been signed, the bureau must do everything necessary to kill its boss, that is, to kill Dragomiloff himself. The contract is valid for a year; if he has managed to survive when the year is up, the contract will be cancelled and he will have the right to live. During this period, he charges Hall not only with looking after Grunya but also with ensuring, as the authorized representative, that the bureau continues to function properly.

From this story – which is admittedly absurd, but related with the utmost seriousness – several lessons can be drawn. First (and this is the usual case with Jack London) a rejection of morality – a hypocritical justification used by the weak to protect themselves from the

strong – in favour of force, a pure life force, according to a conception more or less inspired by Nietzsche (Thus Spoke Zarathustra was one of London's favourite books). Dragomiloff has Herculean strength, and his desire to live is immense, as is attested by the remainder of the plot, devoted to the bureau's efforts to locate and bring down its leader. But the book also establishes an equivalence between the anarchists' conspiracies and the no-less-secret plots on which the workings of capitalism and, more generally, the life of high society surreptiously depend. In this parable, the 'long-haired' socialists are ridiculous humanists who only help perpetuate the social miseries that they claim to be alleviating. The utopian anarchists are merely inept, incapable of sowing even the slightest disorder. As for the capitalists, members of high society, they are criminals, just as the social order from which they benefit is criminal. And Dragomiloff himself uses the same approach, combining brute force with abstract moralism, in his business – which is legal but criminal like every capitalist enterprise – and in his illegal criminal activities.

Symmetrical accusations

For a rapid presentation of the figure of *symmetrization*, we shall rely in particular on John Le Carré's *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*. First published in 1963, the book met with worldwide success: twenty million copies were sold, and a film adaptation was produced almost immediately. In this early novel, the first Le Carré devoted entirely to espionage, the figure of symmetrization finds its most accomplished form, one frequently imitated and exploited even by the author himself. We must note, though, that many features characteristic of the figure of symmetrization had been used by earlier writers, Somerset Maugham in particular (incidentally, Le Carré won the Somerset Maugham Prize for *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*), and later by Graham Greene; these two writers, like John Le Carré, profited in their literary works from experience they had acquired during the years when they themselves belonged to the British intelligence services.

Somerset Maugham was a highly celebrated author of novels and plays when he published a collection of short stories focused on espionage, under the title *Ashenden or the British Agent* (1977 [1927]). Ashenden, a British secret agent operating in Switzerland during the First World War, is a stand-in for the author who, probably in part for the purpose of enlarging his stock of experiences in order to

nourish his work as a writer later on, had agreed to take a post in the British intelligence services.¹⁷ Maugham's innovation in the Ashenden stories was to diminish the status of the main character. The agent in question is an ordinary man whose work consists at least most of the time in ordinary, routine, tedious bureaucratic tasks; by the same token, he comes into contact with unsavoury individuals and uses them to carry out sordid operations. And he does this with a certain detachment, even an amoral outlook, which verges on cynicism. The short stories contain no explicit criticism of the intelligence services, still less of the state or of the Reason of state, but by featuring the banality of espionage as a modality of the banality of evil, they help diminish the aura from which spy stories recounted in the heroic mode had benefited up to that point.

One of Graham Greene's principal contributions to spy fiction, taken up again in large part by Le Carré, consists, according to a thematics evoking the Catholic personalism that attracted Greene, in telling stories that involve entities of great size, such as nationstates, and that play a role in History writ large, from the point of view of persons. These persons described in their most intimate, most vulnerable aspects, stand out by their fragility, the disarray of their emotional lives, and the confusion or the ambivalence of their feelings, in contrast to the heroic figure or even the force that necessarily emanates from characters endowed with clear, sharp and well-tempered personalities. This is the case, for example, with D., the main character of Greene's The Confidential Agent (1939). An emissary of the Spanish Republican government who comes to Great Britain to negotiate secretly for the purchase of an order of coal vitally important to the Spanish economy, D. was once a respected professor but is now a broken man pursued by L., the fascists' envoy, an aristocrat who has penetrated the British upper crust. This is also the case for Arthur Rowe, the anti-hero of The Ministry of Fear, whose adventures we have already noted. Comparable figures can be found in a number of Greene's later novels, as the author connects to varying degrees with detective fiction and/or spy fiction, for example, in The Third Man (1950), 18 or, much later, The Human Factor (1978). In the latter novel, the action conjugates micro and macro levels: it combines the story of a couple in which the man is English and the woman African (the level of intimate personal relations) with the story of a manipulation involving British interests in South Africa (the level of global politics). This text, which has the British intelligence services as its context, can be read as a sort of homage on the part of Graham Greene to John Le Carré, whose work itself owes a

good deal to that of his illustrious predecessor. Focusing on the fragility of the human person allows the writer to draw a dramatic effect from the play on scale. Human beings, minuscule and powerless, are manipulated and ground down by immense entities that resemble machines but are nonetheless endowed with a powerful, if unfathomable, intentionality. It follows that victims of these manipulations can have no intention but to resist, most often without knowing what is really wanted of them and without being able to distinguish between enemies and friends; thus, generally speaking, they resist in vain.

In The Spy Who Came in from the Cold, the assorted themes just evoked are blended in such a way as to develop a critique, relatively new in spy fiction, of bureaucracies as conspiracies. This critique hints at a more radical one (without pursuing it to its ultimate consequences) that consists in unveiling the state, whatever it is and whatever it does, as a conspiracy; we shall return to this version shortly. Even more than his predecessors, who also came from the world of secret services, Le Carré treats espionage as a trade exercised within powerful state organizations. Like all other agents of the state, those who practise this trade are subject to a petty, fastidious discipline about which the author spares us no detail (expense records, retirement credits, humiliating reassignments, obtuse higher-ups, required periods of service, and so on). But it is a deadly business. Even more than military personnel and, in a more immoral fashion, because it is hidden, the members of these secret armies risk their lives and eliminate their adversaries, that is, those persons presumed to be adversaries of the states that employ them. However, the opposing bureaucracies that provide work for these professionals are not simply instruments of the states' efforts at self-perpetuation. They are ends in themselves, or rather – to return to an expression borrowed earlier from Kracauer with regard to crime fiction – they are *finalities* without ends. And the objective finalities that inhabit and drive the agents have no goal but to ensure the proliferation of the conspiracy. The conspiracy is at once what they fabricate and the energy that sustains them in that task.

Finally, each of the bureaucracies engaged in the struggle is the mirror image of the other. Their organizations, their norms, the way they function, their brutality, their scorn for the men they use, manipulate and destroy are similar. One of the original dimensions of the reading contract that Le Carré establishes, and which probably accounts in large part for the success of *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, is a certain complicity with the reader, oriented towards relativism. There are indeed two different conspiracies, but each is

justified only with reference to the other, so that they are accomplices (in keeping with the paradigm of *force* and *counter-force* identified by Michel Serres in his analysis of the painting in which Carpaccio depicts the struggle between St George and the dragon (Serres 1978 [1975]: 34–45).

This complicity is dramatized from the very beginning of the book, when Control assigns Leamas the task of eliminating Mundt, the head of counter-espionage in East Germany, 'a killer' whose brutality justifies the assassination. 'The ethic of our work, as I understand it', Control says, 'is based on a single assumption. That is, we are never going to be aggressors. . . . Thus we do disagreeable things, but we are *defensive*. That, I think, is still fair' (Le Carré 1964: 23).

Unveiling the state as conspiracy

If we were to continue along the path towards which the description of symmetrization has led us, we would reach an ultimate, more radical figure whose analysis would oblige us to cross the boundaries of spy fiction, although we can find rough sketches of it around the 1970s, especially in works by Jean-Patrick Manchette. This figure consists in describing as conspiracy factories not the secret services of nation-states but *the state itself*, in its open or surreptitious associations with technology and with capitalism. The state is thus represented in all its expressions and all its dimensions as a *vast conspiracy*.

As I see it, this is one of the ways in which a book such as George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four, published in 1950 as a work of science fiction, can be understood. However, it is not hard to see that this work occupies an intermediate position between literature of the imagination and a quasi-sociological analysis of the way modern societies work. Nineteen Eighty-Four is generally – and justifiably – interpreted as a pamphlet aimed at totalitarian regimes, especially the Stalinian versions, ¹⁹ or even – certainly wrongly – as a critique of socialism in general.²⁰ Still, it would not be difficult to show that readers could seize on a number of features of the imaginary society presented in Nineteen Eighty-Four to interpret the society in which they were, or had been, immersed, even in cases in which that society, far from being labelled totalitarian, adhered to democracy in its association with capitalism. The modern embodiments of the nation-state project, broadly understood, are presumably the targets of the apocalyptic picture painted in Nineteen Eighty-Four. 21 For this reason, the universe into which Orwell's book plunges twenty-first

century readers is hardly so foreign that they cannot recognize features – taken to an extreme, to be sure – of a political cosmos that has quite probably become familiar both through personal experience and through critical analyses that have helped them orient and understand that experience. Two of these features are especially relevant to the project I am pursuing here.

The first entails a destabilized relation between reality and its representation. One can find other indices of such destabilization in the numerous constructionist or deconstructionist analyses that draw their inspiration from analytic philosophy, from the Frankfurt School's theory of knowledge, or from the death blows dealt to metaphysics by technology as depicted by Heidegger; these constructions have stressed the degree to which reality lacks reality. Reality is constructed. This assertion, which has become a commonplace, goes well beyond an insistence that deception and generalized lying are basic human drives, as dramatized by the satirical literature articulating the disenchantment of the seventeenth-century moralists and by the social criticism of the Enlightenment thinkers. It also goes far beyond the denunciation of lying on the part of the state that constituted the primary material for the pamphlet as a dominant literary genre, at least in the sense that it was one of the principal sites of stylistic innovation, especially in France, from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth (Angenot 1982). Nor can it be reduced to critiques of ideologies self-identified with Marxism – which at least in its ordinary expressions has relied most often on an empirical and even scientific conception of truth – or to the effects of literary appropriation of the Freudian topos that takes for granted and generalizes – also using scientific knowledge as a justification – the dominance of the unconscious over the conscious mind.

Taken to extremes, the idea that reality was constructed did not simply offer a new slogan for beliefs that are generalized in the 'age of suspicion', that is, in an era when the values of science and those of the democracy of public opinion became dominant and thus, in spite of everything, remained beliefs. This idea dissolves reality in the multiple operations that converge to construct it and by the same token prevent it from being distinguished any longer from its representation, leading to a process of embedding that destroys the metaphysical footing for the understanding of history (and thus of the social in general), and it also necessarily destroys self-interpretation of personal experience, that is, *causality*. The principal tool for establishing causal relations, as I suggested in chapter 1, is *attribution*, inasmuch as attribution allows events and entities to be

related. Now, this process presupposes that at least one of the two terms in the relationship is stabilized. But if the entities involved are constructed as a function of the events to which it seems politically necessary, at a given moment, to attribute them, and if the events themselves are *constructed* in such a way as to incriminate a given entity to which they are attributed, the fundamental task of historical explanation and also of sociological analysis dissolves in a circular moment whose endpoint cannot be determined.²² 'The Gulf War did not take place.'23 Now, this dissolution of reality, present and past, in its representation, obtained by manipulations giving rise to a series of interpretations that cannot be brought to an end, is precisely one of the principal effects of the logic of conspiracy in its fictional expressions. Novels grasp it both to denounce it and to arouse in readers a kind of *vertigo*, but in a ludic mode that simultaneously produces and defuses the associated fear and excitement. And this same vertigo is aroused by the possibility open to everyone of being thrust into a social environment that escapes the principle of causality and makes every experienced reality the result of a manipulation perpetrated by unknown entities who are themselves manipulated, and so on ad infinitum, according to serial or stochastic modalities.

In Nineteen Eighty-Four, conspiracy is at the heart of the state - conspiracy is the state - in several different ways. One of the distinguishing features of Orwell's sociological art is precisely that he manages to integrate in a single political configuration the obvious constraint imposed on persons by the state's hyper-organization, with its rules, hierarchies, disciplinary codes and the diffuse threat that weighs on persons owing to the way power is secretly distributed among agencies and individuals whose situations are themselves labile and often opaque, even to the individuals in question. It is thus impossible to know who one's friends are ('Winston had never been able to feel sure . . . whether O'Brien was a friend or an enemy' [Orwell 1982 (1949): 18–19]), who is one's subordinate and who is one's superior, who is submissive and who is rebellious, so that the course of existence, in its most ordinary aspects, is both strictly determined and absolutely unpredictable. In this representation of the political, the state achieves absolute power first as a conspiracy in itself and, secondly, by constantly identifying conspiracies against the state that are presumed to pose dramatic threats to the survival of society.

Conspiracies thus have as their object the *construction of reality*. They format reality, even in its seemingly most contingent dimensions, on the one hand as if to harden it maximally and make it

unshakeable, and on the other hand as if to modify its contours, present, past or future ('The mutability of the past is the central tenet of Ingsoc' [Orwell 1982 (1949): 142]). The actors who all work to produce this effect, with quite varied means and extensions, are themselves unaware of the orientation of the always piecemeal documentary manipulations that they are obliged to carry out and that take on meaning only in relation to the totality that emerges from a fragmented multiplicity of actions whose coordination is opaque. 'Reality control' (25) is the principal instrument of power. It is expressed in 'novlang', 'double-think': 'To know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously to two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them ... to forget whatever it was necessary to forget, then to draw it back into memory again at the moment when it was needed, and then promptly to forget it again, and above all, to apply the same process to the process itself' (ibid.).

Orwell seems at first to be associating totalitarianism with a rigidly organized society whose centre is occupied by a simultaneously allpowerful and invisible being, Big Brother. But this being is devoid of physical presence; it is endowed only with *media* presence. It is indeed always there, even in the most intimate situations, but only through the intermediary of omnipresent screens, in public and in private. These screens are placed in every home, as television screens are today, but, unlike the instruments we are familiar with, these work in both directions (a feature that has become the explicit goal of telereality, moreover). Now what Winston discovers, once he is in O'Brien's hands, is that Big Brother too exists only, like everything else, in the mode of artefact ('Does Big Brother exist?' 'Of course he exists.' . . . 'Does he exist the same way I exist?' 'You do not exist' [ibid.: 172]), as is also the case with Goldstein, the author of the book of truth, the critic par excellence. Nineteen Eighty-Four can be read as the Bildungsroman of a social world that has discovered its own construction and has even discovered the derisory nature of any endeavour to deconstruct. As in the ritual of the Tambaran among the Arapesh of New Guinea, studied by Donald Tuzin,²⁴ where the ultimate secret, revealed at the end of a long and painful initiatory trajectory, is the non-existence of the secret, that is, the non-existence of any foundation; the only belief that can be required, in the universe described by Orwell, is that there is nothing that warrants belief.²⁵ Or, alternatively, that it is useless and self-destructive to pretend that one can reach a world situated beyond reality understood as constructed

reality. It is on this belief, or on this absolute absence of belief, that the possibility of survival depends. The most restrictive order can thus be maintained without a structured and coherent organization, and even without a leader endowed with omnipotence who embodies power. Similar effects can be achieved by a mechanical aggregation of actions, each determined with reference to the others according to the principle of seriality, and each coordinated with the others on the model of contagion.

The same thing holds true for conspiracies, whose reality is indistinguishable from their dramatization. Threats of conspiracy, made palpable by sporadic, adroitly orchestrated acts of terrorism, result in the maintenance, through fear, of a diffuse belief in the presence of an enemy that is at once threatening, concealed and multiform ('foreign enemies and internal traitors' [ibid.: 141]). Being indefinable by construction, this actant can be replaced by any entity at all, according to the requirements of the political circumstances, and this makes it possible to justify the repression and permanent warfare that is the ordinary state of the nation-state and outside of which the state cannot prosper. (One of its slogans is 'war is peace'.) But this perpetual war is 'low intensity', as we might put it today, so that the word 'war' itself is no longer applicable, for 'by becoming continuous war has ceased to exist' (133). Moreover, those who belong to the amorphous masses, the 'proles', are 'only intermittently conscious of the war'; thus 'they are capable of forgetting for long periods that the war is happening' (144).

The second feature I would like to stress concerns the relation between the uniformizing aim of power and the exacerbation of the social differences of the political construction Orwell develops in Nineteen Eighty-Four. The society he describes is at once very strongly, even violently, hierarchical, in the oligarchic mode, and according to modalities that differ from 'class in the old sense of the word' (139), while at the same time they rely on the principle according to which it is the state's responsibility to ensure if not the well-being then at least the biological survival of the masses. This charge requires constant control. The forms of control - rewards and punishments - described in Nineteen Eighty-Four are those of a state whose principles and justifications are of the biopolitical order. It is because life - 'bare life', as Agamben says (1998) - is the very object of the state that the state is required to meddle in the smallest interstices of everyday existence. 'Reality only exerts its pressure through the needs of everyday life - the need to eat and drink, to get shelter and clothing . . . Between life and death, and between physical

pleasure and physical pain, there is still a distinction, but that is all' (132).

Nonetheless, and this is one of Orwell's most perceptive sociological intuitions, the members of this surveillance society are both more tightly controlled and all the better trained for reciprocal control and self-control as they move up in the hierarchy. The higher the position, the more strongly the person must have 'not only the right opinions, but the right instincts' (141). In training these 'instincts', the repression of sexual desires, undertaken 'from childhood onwards', plays a major role ('Not love so much as eroticism was the enemy' [45]). 'Breeding' is the only biopolitically acceptable justification for the sex act (although the powers that be close their eyes to prostitution, deeming it 'an outlet for instincts that could not be altogether suppressed' [ibid.]). Conversely, the 'proles' (95% of the population) are much less controlled, for nothing is asked of them but to keep on working and breeding (48). They are virtually outside the law, outside morality and perfectly free to act as they wish on the sexual level. As another slogan puts it, 'proles and animals are free' (49).

In a society of this type, where conspiracy, state conspiracy, is the driving principle, and where the difference between reality and its representation becomes indistinguishable, the only possible position of externality from which this cosmos can be viewed as what it is without even mentioning critique – is offered by chance encounters between persons, faces, bodies. This is the case with the encounter between Winston and Julia in a clearing, surrounded by hyacinths and thrushes, near a brook; their meeting reaches maximum intensity with sexual exchange. Love, envisaged in its sexual dimension, constitutes the only reserve of authenticity and thus the only authentically political resource. For only in the *immediacy* of a relation that engages desires and bodies can persons surmount the alienation to which human beings are prev when they give themselves over to a mediation that wrenches them out of themselves. Even if, as the desperate conclusion of Winston and Julia's story reveals, access to the authenticity procured by love is also destined to be undermined by betrayal, that is, in an assent to reality as constructed reality.

Mediation, which subordinates presence to operations carried out from afar, is not in itself a conspiracy, but its natural bent is to tend inevitably towards conspiracy. While presence encloses the possibility of a certainty resulting directly from experience, distance, which constrains each person to form beliefs based on nothing but the word of another, opens up the possibility of manipulation, that is, of an operation through which others act intentionally in such a way as to

arouse the formation of certain beliefs in certain persons. As James Mileham has shown, analysing the figure of conspiracy in Balzac's work from a Greimassian perspective, the kind of intrigue that is based on the existence of a conspiracy always depends on at least three actants, one being in the median position with respect to the other two. One actant, intending to act on another, does not exercise his or her power directly, but operates through the intermediary of a third party who is in the position of mediator, whether or not this third person is aware of the plot that is being woven through him or her (Mileham 1982).

In the opposition between the authenticity of presence and the duplicity of distance, and in the critique of mediation, there is a recognizable thematics, analysed by Derrida (1976 [1967]) and of which Rousseau was one of the great masters: it underlies, for example, Rousseau's distaste for representative democracy as opposed to direct democracy. But this thematics has probably never been as frequently and as intensively re-utilized as in the twentieth century, that is, in a period dominated by a desperate attempt on the part of nation-states to seize all the reality deployed on a territory in order to determine it from a distance. Is it necessary to recall that this same thematics was in large measure the basis for the surrealist posture (with the most intense stress placed on love and on chance encounters – for example, in André Breton's Nadja - viewed as the principal path towards authenticity), and that it is extended and deepened by the situationist critique that continues to unveil the minimal reality of the reality dramatized by instruments of power, especially by the state, and to denounce conspiracies?

Conspiracy and paranoia

The term 'paranoid' is often used to characterize those who, like Scudder in *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, make it their personal mission to uncover large-scale conspiracies. An association between the political views of such individuals and the delirium of mental illness is taken for granted. In many cases, this commonplace judgement is based on accusations of a grandiose conspiracy, one that brings alien abductions into play, for example, or mind-control operations carried out from a distance by means of airborne chemical products. These absurd stories seem to hold particular fascination for social science specialists writing about 'conspiracy theories', whether they find the stories on the internet in texts produced by small militant groups frequently associated with the far right (Taguieff 2005) or in fictional works such as *The X-Files*. In studies dealing with the theme of conspiracy, such cases are often set alongside other examples that involve the subversive activity of 'secret societies' or 'sects'. The relation between 'sects' and 'conspiracies' seems to be reversible, moreover. Sometimes authors who emphasize the role of a sect in contemporary social life are accused of believing in a conspiracy theory. Sometimes legally recognized groups or associations are viewed as sects - and frequently by the same authors (psychiatrists, for instance). This characterization, associated with the charge of 'mind manipulation' or 'brainwashing', can lead the competent state authorities (France has an official Interministerial Mission for Combating Sects) to register them as sects whose activities, deemed surreptitious and harmful, are subject to surveillance on the part of the national intelligence services (Esquerre 2009).

One thing leading to another, the accusation that certain entities or individuals have developed 'conspiracy theories' focuses on discourses – and these are very numerous – that are intended to unveil and denounce instances of hidden connivance between members of 'elites' and, for example, the role played by intellectual circles or by international institutions in setting up economic arrangements stemming from what is known today as neo-liberalism. The beliefs and the collectives that are mentioned in works devoted to the study of 'conspiracy theories' can be quite varied. Certain of these are notoriously non-existent (for example, the 'Reptilians'). Some more or less secret societies are generally taken to be real and have been objects of research by political scientists or historians (for example, in the United States, the Yale student society known as Skull & Bones, to which a number of major public figures are reputed to have belonged). Others have - or have had - an official character, even though neither their members' names nor their meetings are made public (for example, the Bilderberg Group, the Rosicrucians, the Mont Pélerin Society and the Trilateral Commission). Still others are services that act with discretion and sometimes carry out secret, even illegal, operations but are nevertheless under the control of nation-states (the CIA, for one). However, these diverse collective entities are often treated as if they constituted a single genre. Their existence, the belief in their existence, the proliferation of references to them, in fictional works as well as in political pamphlets, have all been viewed at one time or another as the sign of a mental illness that has progressively invaded the world since the end of the nineteenth century: paranoia.¹

Can one say of John Buchan – the author whose most famous book served as our focal point in the previous chapter – that he was paranoid? By writing a book in which one of the main characters reveals the existence of a worldwide conspiracy, and by unfolding a story that confirms this assertion (instead of considering it, for instance, from a critical or at least sceptical viewpoint), does Buchan present a symptom from which one might conclude that his case belongs to the realm of psychiatry? And what can be said of the very large number of readers who have devoured this popular book in which Scudder exposes his ideas? Are they paranoid as well?

A critical interpretation of paranoia

To try to determine whether Buchan and his readers were, or are, paranoid or not, we may turn to a description of paranoia borrowed

from contemporary psychiatry. Not being a psychiatrist myself, I have chosen to rely on a presentation that, while maintaining a sufficient level of technical exigency, was designed to introduce the mechanisms involved in paranoia to a non-specialist public. Erich Wulff's text (1987), which we shall follow here, was published in the proceedings of a symposium on social psychology that took place in Bad Homburg in 1985; the theme of the symposium was conspiracy. Wulff's analyses have the advantage, for our purposes, of not offering an etiology of cases of paranoia that would rely on singular histories of sexual orientations and family complexes; instead, they focus on the general psychic processes that accompany the unfolding of the illness and the formation of its symptoms. Wulff invokes the Freudian theory of paranoia, retaining from it principally the mechanisms of investment (cathexis) that Freud mentions at the end of his essay on President Schreber.² Wulff centres his analysis on the loss or displacement of cathexis and on defence mechanisms. But, following phenomenological psychopathology (and in particular Ludwig Binswanger's existential psychoanalysis), he extends the term 'cathexis' beyond its strictly erotic dimension to include the general interest taken in objects of the external world. Thus, cathexis involves both the totality of what is, inasmuch as this totality is associated with socially constructed meanings, and the set of human beings with whom each individual enters into concrete relationships. Wulff defines paranoia as a partial or total withdrawal from cathexis directed towards the external world; it may go as far as catatonia. It is in struggling against this withdrawal that the patient develops a delirium corresponding to the clinical descriptions of paranoia.

During a child's development, according to Wulff, cathexis as an affective relation to the world, on the one hand, and cognitive apprenticeship of the structures of the world, on the other, follow parallel processes. In adulthood, the development of cognitive structures is interrupted. But cathexis can be subject to significant variations: it can be withdrawn from certain objects or even from the entire external world, which is then disinvested in such a way that the whole experience of reality is affected. The external world remains thinkable and imaginable, owing to the persistence of cognitive structures, but it loses its immediate meaning – its self-evidence – owing to the withdrawal of subjective cathexis. In the absence of subjective interests, reasons for acting also disappear. Paranoid illusions are thus envisaged as compensatory efforts (or defence mechanisms) aimed at reconstituting investment in the world and at filling the holes in the experience of reality that have been dug by the patient's

withdrawal, so as to allow new subjective engagements, often at the price of an infantile regression. The patient recognizes the form of a teapot, for example, *that* teapot sitting on the table in front of him, but the teapot no longer has any psychological salience, no more self-evidence, no subjective meaning, so that the patient is unable to re-situate it in his experience of reality and does not know how to behave towards it. It could just as well be something entirely different. By viewing it as, in fact, a bomb, he re-injects investment in his apprehension of the world.

According to Wulff, whose analyses are based on his clinical experience, the illusion of conspiracy held by paranoid patients does not originate, in most cases, in the conviction that a conspiracy and conspirators actually exist, that they could be identified and named, but rather in the intense feeling that there is something hidden behind the visible appearances whose immediate meaning has vanished. Now, this feeling is linked to the withdrawal of cathexis and to the compensatory attempts to re-establish a subjective engagement in the objects of the external world. Thus the world presents itself as a set of signs that have to be decoded. What others reveal of themselves is not their reality: that remains hidden behind appearances. This feeling of strangeness can even involve the perception of one's own body, which can be accused of sending messages that are impossible to interpret. Intentionality is maintained, but it is submerged by omnipresent effects whose true cause cannot be identified, and this makes orientation towards action difficult, except for sporadic outbursts. As long as the loss of investment is maintained, attempts at reparation can offer only temporary relief, so that the search for hidden realities and causalities is a literally infinite task that has to be relaunched without respite. This work is accompanied by the establishment of correspondences among the various interpretive components, a procedure that tends to eliminate the very possibility of chance or even the acceptance of an uncertainty that would make it impossible to reach a conclusion owing to incomplete information. In contrast, according to Wulff, the attitude that consists in settling for partial explanations and proving able to interrupt one's investigation in order to turn to other things or to bracket the question of truth - defined as an absolute - constitutes the distinctive feature of behaviour that can be qualified as 'normal'.

It should be noted, finally, that Wulff clearly distinguishes between the sentiments and sensations that besiege the patient and the narrative structures that the patient sets up in an attempt to get others – and especially the psychiatrist – to understand what he or she is

feeling. These structures, which can be compared to rationalizations after the fact, draw on a repertory of available social representations. They may thus evoke conspiracies borrowed from multiple forms of accusation directed at certain groups, often minorities, or they may resort to the vast repertory of images offered by science, and especially by science fiction. Patients may then describe themselves as 'receivers' besieged by 'radio waves' or 'radiations' from the outside, or as being manipulated from afar by 'extraterrestrials', and so on. In the course of this metaphorical work, patients may also call on the rich vocabulary of the theatre, which has been exploited especially since Christian antiquity to stress the artificiality of apparent reality, as in the numerous moral and political discourses referring to the theatrum mundi (Christian 1987). This distinction between the psychic constraints imposed on the patient, on the one hand, and the encyclopedias available in a given social formation to which afflicted subjects can resort in order to translate what is assailing them, on the other hand, make it possible to maintain a gap between two different approaches. One approach involves focusing on the properly psychic illness, which may prove to have an organic basis and is treated as an ahistorical entity; the other approach is oriented towards the forms that this illness may take and the expressions that characterize it in specific historical circumstances. With the latter approach, very different manifestations can be brought together on the phenomenological level: for example, those that in certain states of society resort to the repertory of sorcery (see, for example, Bonhomme 2009) and those that, in other social contexts, call instead on the repertory of science fiction or large-scale political manipulation.

The primitive conception of paranoia

In the absence of any information about John Buchan's psychic life, his family background or his sexual cathexes, I shall be careful not to establish the slightest parallel between the description of this mental illness that I have borrowed from the psychiatrist Erich Wulff and the author's life and work. Still, we can note that, if he was actually paranoid, the affliction did not prevent him (unlike President Schreber) from being perfectly integrated into the respectable society of his time, or from having what can be deemed a fine career, since he was the author of about thirty books, some of which were highly successful, and since he played a significant role in the British state, first in the intelligence services and later as a deputy in Parliament,

before serving as Governor General of Canada. This example helps show how difficult it is to establish a connection – though this is often treated as unproblematic today – between the psychiatric and sociopolitical uses of the term 'paranoia'. The first designate a certain type of mental illness and/or certain individual personalities that may present a predisposition to suffering from this type of illness. The second appear later, in the writings of essayists or representatives of the social sciences – especially political scientists – and designate collectives or even societies as a whole.

However, countering the idea that the use made of the term 'paranoia' in the social sciences has been merely a metaphorical and even abusive derivative of its legitimate use in the domain of psychiatry, I should now like to present some elements in support of the converse thesis. Setting aside Freud's position (Freud, Erich Wulff's principal source, borrowed the term from the psychiatry of his own day but gave it a specific technical meaning and a precise etiology in the context of a general theory of psychic life), let us go back to the earliest psychiatric descriptions of this nosological entity. We shall see that the identification of this mental illness, at the very end of the nineteenth century, was based on features attached to a characterology whose social dimension is obvious.

The term 'paranoia' appeared for the first time in modern psychiatry in Germany, in 1863, in the work of Karl Ludwig Kahlbaum; its sweeping extension covered various sorts of 'primitive systematized deliriums' that might or might not be accompanied by hallucinations.³ In 1899, in the sixth edition of Emil Kraepelin's Clinical *Psychiatry*, the term 'paranoia' was associated with a set of signs and symptoms that served to identify this new nosological entity, at least until Freud's ideas began to spread after the First World War. One characteristic of this nosological picture was that it took into account a constellation of 'small secondary signs' in such a way as to constitute a 'clinico-evolutive entity'. Now, these signs, on which clinical psychiatry was to rely for its descriptions of paranoia, had from the start, among their principal exponents (Kraepelin in Germany, Eugenio Tanzi in Italy, Paul Sérieux and Joseph Capgras in France), a social and even a political dimension. The term 'paranoid' refers simultaneously to a type of pathological personality and to a social type (in the sense of the nineteenth-century social novel) characterized by a set of 'psychological traits' - pride, suspicion, psychic rigidity, falsity of judgement, inadaptability – that together trace the outline of a 'character'. Paranoids are thus described as 'protesters' who develop a 'persecution complex', a 'delirium of interpretation' and a

'delusion of grandeur'. They believe that they are victims of 'prejudice' and 'injustice', and they are in general 'socially maladapted' persons whose 'delirium of fabulation' relies on religious or political 'convictions' that have an 'altruistic' and 'idealistic' character, along with a passion that leads to fanaticism.

The character of paranoia as a 'social' mental illness is particularly stressed in the work of the doctors Sérieux and Capgras, Kraepelin's two French disciples, who focus on describing the 'delirium of protest' and the 'delirium of interpretation'. For these psychiatrists, the protester 'gets enthusiastic about chimerical projects or inventions' but lacks 'any notion of good and evil . . . even though he constantly uses words such as "probity", "conscience" and "honour". He chooses 'a person or a group of persons' in order to 'pursue them with [his] hatred' (Sérieux and Capgras 1982: 100), and 'because no one pays enough attention to his recriminations, he concludes that corruption is universal' (1982: 100-1). As for his 'delusional interpretation', often associated with 'ideas of persecution and ideas of grandeur', it 'is not addressed to the phenomenon itself, but to the circumstances of the phenomenon, to its causes or its consequences . . . Where others see only chance or coincidence, he (the paranoid person), thanks to his penetrating clairvoyance, is capable of sorting out the truth and the secret relationships of things' (1982: 105). It was no doubt this tendency to see, beyond the appearances of phenomena, the 'causes' and 'consequences' of events presented as fortuitous or as unrelated to one another, that incited Sérieux and Capgras to bring subjects afflicted with this type of delirium together with another figure whom they call 'a sociologist'. This figure, on the same basis as the paranoid patient, appeared on the public stage around the time the doctors were recording their observations.

Despite their apparent diversity, which stems solely from the nature of the obsessive idea and from the variable modes of reaction, all protesters are identical. Their psychosis is characterized by two constant signs: a prevailing idea, and intellectual exaltation. From this standpoint there is no fundamental difference between someone obsessing with filing suits in a relentless effort to obtain reparations for a claimed or real denial of justice and someone searching for the philosopher's stone who spends his energy and his fortune carrying out vain pursuits in a laboratory, or a dreamy sociologist who expends his ardour propagating his theories and pressing for their realisation. (Sérieux and Capgras 1982: 100)

Kraepelin and especially Tanzi, under the influence of Cesare Lombroso, construct paranoia by relying on themes connected with

social Darwinism. The various manifestations of delirium are rooted in a degenerate personality. But they are stimulated by the 'failures' experienced. The delusion of persecution is based on 'deficient dispositions', especially 'indolence' and 'lack of energy', resulting in an 'inadequate struggle for life' (quoted in Lacan (1980 [1932]): 59). What characterizes the paranoid individual in comparison to those one might call 'normal failures' is his 'resistance' in the face of failure, his 'passionate struggle against the rigours of life, where he recognises hostile influences' (ibid.: 23). This struggle is at the root of excessive 'self-love'. This pathological self-love is attributed to an inability to give up the hopes and ambitions of adolescence. Among normal individuals, 'the exuberance of youth, wholly oriented towards great actions and intense experiences, recedes little by little in the face of life's resistances' (ibid.). But this is not the case with paranoia. The outlandish overestimation of their own capacities, the delusion of grandeur that characterizes paranoid individuals, is, for Kraepelin. 'the framework pursued into adulthood of the high-flying plans of youth' (60).

The man of ressentiment as the embodiment of modernity

It is probably impossible to understand how this simultaneously psychiatric and social description of paranoia has been so successful, spreading well beyond the realm of psychiatry itself, without seeing how it depends on a backdrop of ordinary beliefs, political biases and schemas aspiring to philosophical dignity that spread through Europe from the late nineteenth century to the 1920s and 1930s. These schemas still remain available to be reactivated, moreover, every time a particularly scabrous social situation leads to a relaunching of critique. In such a situation, the responsible parties – that is, members of the class of persons who control the machinery of power – deem it urgent to reinforce the boundary between the true elites (themselves) and the mass of pretentious and dangerous individuals nourished by illusions that challenge their authority. The latter group obviously includes all those who do not really understand why they are set aside ('excluded') when they have the kinds of capacities – often certified by diplomas – that ought to open the way if not to recognition, intellectual in particular, then at least to survival, if the officially proclaimed values are to be believed.

To illustrate this thematics and the simultaneously social and literary uses to which it has been put, I shall take as an example a work in

which it is developed with particular clarity. From an abundance of possibilities, I have chosen an ambitious and unquestionably influential text in which we find the expression of a project of philosophical anthropology seeking to bring phenomenology and sociology into convergence, a project that was pursued, especially in Germany, during the period between the world wars. I refer to Max Scheler's *Ressentiment*, first published in 1912 and republished with modifications in 1915.

In *Ressentiment*, Scheler sets out first of all to analyse the notion of *ressentiment* as proposed by Nietzsche in *The Genealogy of Morals*, so as to develop on that foundation a philosophical anthropology capable of enlightening the European sociology of his time; secondly, he seeks to exonerate Christianity from the Nietzschean accusation that sees it as the origin of *ressentiment*; finally, he undertakes a critique of 'humanitarianism', as well as of other forms of transmutation of values which he believes he has identified in modern morality. It is essentially the first part, titled 'On the Phenomenology and Sociology of *Ressentiment*', that will concern us here (Scheler 1994 [1912/1915]: 27–57).

Ressentiment, which Scheler defines as 'a self-poisoning of the mind', originates in a 'desire for revenge', which he distinguishes from brutality by its *reactive* character (29). Whereas, with brutality, hatred is immediately transformed into violence and exhausts itself, moreover, when it passes into action, vengeance takes the form of ressentiment when it is deferred because the person who would like to carry it out knows that he does not have the means to do so and is compelled to exercise restraint. Ressentiment is thus the manifestation of an 'inability' and an 'impotence' that characterize the 'weak' (30): those 'who fruitlessly resent the sting of authority', such as 'those who serve' (31). Then the desire for vengeance is turned into an unquenchable bitterness, and into a general disposition oriented 'toward indeterminate groups of objects' (32). A typical expression of ressentiment, this disposition leads to acts of destruction characterized by the absence of any particular motive. A vindictive person demonstrates a permanent susceptibility, and, prey to a systematic process of illusion, he 'tends to see injurious intentions in all kinds of perfectly innocent actions and remarks of others' (ibid.). Confident of 'being right', he also has powerful repressed inner tendencies disproportionate to the social situation he occupies, a situation that was characteristic (or so the author suggests in a note) of the 'enormous explosion of ressentiment in the French Revolution against the nobility and everything connected with its way of living' (147, n. 4).

Seeking to establish the etiology of the tendency towards ressentiment, Scheler notes that it can be linked to the 'character' and the 'feelings' of individuals, but that these 'dispositions', which are particularly pronounced in certain persons (and among women generally speaking), truly develop only in contexts tied to the 'very *structure* of society'. What gives ressentiment free rein is, in fact, 'the discrepancy between the political, constitutional, or traditional status of a group and its factual power' (33). Ressentiment thus reaches its apex in 'a society like ours, where approximately equal rights (political and otherwise) or formal social equality, publicly recognized, go hand-inhand with wide factual differences in power, property, and education. While each has the "right" to compare himself with everyone else, he cannot do so in fact.' In such societies, the weak, the bitter, those who have failed, consider their very 'existence' and their 'status as a sufficient motive for vengeance' (ibid.). Thus, Scheler adds, 'Jewish ressentiment, which Nietzsche rightly designates as enormous. finds double nourishment: first in the discrepancy between the colossal national pride of "the chosen people" and a contempt and discrimination which weighed on them for centuries like a destiny, and in modern times through the added discrepancy between formal constitutional equality and factual discrimination' (33-4).5 But similar remarks can be made about those who are prey to class ressentiment and criticize society in the name of the 'proletariat' (34).

A critique that grows out of ressentiment can never be satisfied by 'improvements in the conditions criticized' because it is nourished by the 'growing pleasure afforded by invective and negation' (ibid.). Ressentiment is thus at the origin of nihilism. It is accompanied by repression, which induces self-hatred. Unlike the 'common man', the 'criminal' or the 'arriviste', who are all, in their own way, men of action, the man of ressentiment is a weakling, an impotent, handicapped person whose critique 'does not seriously desire that its demands be fulfilled' (34). The man feeling ressentiment criticizes those who dominate him only to the extent that he knows it is impossible for him to be like them in what is most inherent in them. To the strong, the dominant, such a man says: "I can forgive everything, but not that you are - that you are what you are - that I am not what you are - indeed that I am not you". This form of envy strips the opponent of his very existence, for this existence as such is felt to be a "pressure," a "reproach," and an unbearable humiliation' (35). Ressentiment thus leads a man to the point of denying the very values to which he cannot accede. He then veils these unattainable values under a layer of illusory values. 'The ressentiment experience

is always characterized by this "transparent" presence of the true and objective values behind the illusory ones – by that obscure awareness that one lives in a *sham world* which one is unable to penetrate' (42).

In Scheler's portrait of the man of ressentiment, it is easy to recognize some of the principal features of the paranoid individual as described by Kraepelin and his disciples: a nihilist propensity to give oneself over to wholesale critique, without any real motives and without any limits; pretentiousness and grandiosity; envy and impotence in the face of life's exigencies; refusal to recognize one's failures and attribute them to one's own deficiencies; repression, and hatred of everything turned inwards as self-hatred; a passion for spiteful interpretations; loss of the sense of reality and of the very possibility of a direct relation with 'the world and things'; the 'obscure awareness that one lives in a sham world'; and so on. Presented by Kraepelin as characteristic of an individual pathology, this way of being is viewed by Scheler in its social and above all its political dimensions. Because he sees himself not only as a phenomenologist but as a sociologist, Scheler wrests paranoia from the field of individual pathology and recognizes it as the extreme tendency of a social pathology. This pathology arises when modern democracies, caught in the trap that arises as formal equality shifts towards real equality, drag individuals - primarily through schooling - out of their conditions of origin and give them hope of acceding to social situations to which they cannot really lay claim, both because the economic realities of society stand in the way and because the schools have misled these individuals and have failed to endow them in fact with the capacities that are really necessary (even though these capacities are most often imponderable) if they are to realize their hopes. Now, this democratic illusion, spread in an inconsistent fashion by democracies themselves, constitutes the greatest danger democracies have to face. The contradiction inherent in this political form announces its unavoidable decline.

The revolt of frustrated intellectuals

Max Scheler reactivated and revalorized, as it were, a thematics that has ancient origins but that was so widely recognized as relevant at the turn of the twentieth century that he could re-appropriate it, or rather let himself be gripped by it in good faith, without concerning himself with its history. This thematics proclaimed the danger that an 'excess of educated men' represented for society.

The same claim had been made in the Protestant world in the sev-

enteenth century; it centred on the question of culture and access to culture. It consisted in valorizing culture while at the same time insisting on the difference between 'good' culture, useful to the common welfare, and 'bad' culture, destructive in its effects. Culture is beneficial when it is embodied in men (before the late nineteenth century, the question of women rarely arose⁶) among whom the quantity of knowledge acquired was appropriate to the occupation of a social position endowed with an equivalent quantity of responsibility. The fact of having to measure up to the practical tasks of governing, that is, to the exercise of power, even if only a pastoral power, was considered necessary as a counter-weight to the inherent hubris in the desire for culture. Unlimited by nature, this hubris leads those whom it seizes towards excess, predisposes them to fall under the empire of radical ideas and to become revolutionaries.

Starting in the mid-1960s, this thematics became the object of study for a number of modernist historians. However, the work these historians produced can be interpreted in two rather different ways. The first consists in following the history of a representation; the second, in proposing a historical explanation. The authors sometimes seem to have used their textual sources, chiefly English and French, ranging from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, in order to write the history of a social representation and a political accusation: they often represented 'the excess of educated men', to borrow Lenore O'Boyle's term (1970), as the principal cause of extremist movements and revolutions. These authors thus contributed to the study of counter-revolutions, or what Albert Hirschman has called the 'rhetoric of reaction' (1991). They sometimes used the same sources to explain why learned (or rather 'semi-learned') men had manifested penchants for radical ideas in different periods and in different social and political contexts. These historians then seemed tempted to emphasize in their turn the very dangers evoked by the texts they were studying, whose spontaneous sociology they appeared to have adopted.

This ambiguity probably has to do with the multiple uses that had been made of the figure of the semi-learned man, rootless and impoverished, in thrall to radical ideas. (A second schema, often associated with the 'excess of educated men' theme, consisted in accusing those who revealed the existence of conspiracies of giving in to 'conspiracy theories'; I shall come back to this point later on.) The idea of an 'excess of educated men' lent itself to exploitation from the right and the left alike. From conservative positions, it served to target anarchists, socialists or communists; from progressive or liberal positions (liberal in the American sense), it served to explain the success

of fascist groups between the two world wars. Thus, it played a role in the formation of the political figure according to which extreme positions 'come full circle' and meet, allowing communism, anarchism, and fascism to be seen as equivalent (red-black-brown); this view occupied an important place, as we know, in the arguments that accompanied the formation of the first wave of neo-liberalism in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s.

Let us recall, finally, that the schema that entailed associating the 'excess of educated men' with revolutionary tendencies resurfaced in another form, that of 'relative frustration', in the sociology of the 1960s and 1970s (Runciman 1966; Boudon 1977). It then served to explain why many students, artists and intellectuals had 'tilted' into political extremism during or following the events of May 1968. One may suppose, moreover, that the interest of historians in this schema was stimulated by the interest evinced by sociologists; this would also allow us to understand why historians found it hard to choose between the two options outlined earlier.

According to Roger Chartier (1982), in the wake of M. H. Curtis (1962), the idea of associating the rise of extremist ideas with the over-abundant presence of frustrated intellectuals from the lower social strata took shape in seventeenth-century England to explain the development of a radical Puritanism that transmitted a social and political critique. This phenomenon was perceived as resulting from the overproduction of university graduates who found no vicarages to occupy 'by right' and ended up as arrogant, frustrated and aggressive 'lecturers'. On the level of ideas, these educated men did not experience the reality of parish management and thus lacked a counter-weight that would have contained and tempered the religious exaltation aroused by their initial formation. And on the level of everyday life, they could not help but suffer from the gap between the scope of the aspirations aroused by years of study and the poverty of their living conditions.

The theme of an excess of downwardly mobile intellectuals can be found again in seventeenth-century Paris, where well-known writers denounced the 'starving scribblers' as riff-raff: these semi-illiterates who had left their provinces in the vain hope of succeeding in the capital expressed their bitterness by denigrating every respectable person and value (Darnton 1979; Chartier 2000). Lenore O'Boyle identifies numerous traces of the same motif in nineteenth-century Europe, where the mass of educated men, without work, bitter and potentially rebellious, was viewed as a social danger (1970). The theme of the mediocre, frustrated intellectual was taken up again by

historians of the nineteenth-century as a causal explanantion of the French Revolution (Cochin 1979); it was used in a generalized form in the 1970s by many political scientists and sociologists to account for revolutionary tendencies (Gurr 1974).

Nihilism, ambivalence and ressentiment

Looking at these three figures – the paranoid individual, the man of *ressentiment* and the downgraded intellectual – among whom resonances and correspondences are pronounced without always being explicit, we see a portrait taking shape that we shall find again in spy novels or in other literary works that dramatize subversive conspiracies. It is nothing other than the theme of social criticism, and, more precisely, that of the critical intellectual, described as semi-intellectual, supernumerary, disruptive, anomic, exempting himself from the division of social labour and remaining deliberately on the margins, a figure whose hate-filled drives and revolutionary tendencies constitute a danger to society.

One of the distinctive features of the motif of the supernumerary, mediocre, rebellious (and potentially paranoid) intellectual lies in the way it associates two other motifs that accompany the development of the social sciences, one demographic and economic, the other psychological. The former emphasizes the disproportion between the (excessive) number of men who claim to possess knowledge (judged mediocre, moreover) because they have had schooling, even a university education, and the (insufficient) number of social positions capable of absorbing them. The psychological motif relies on the schema of ressentiment as illustrated by Max Scheler. The revolutionary danger lies in the conjunction of these two motifs. The man overcome by ressentiment in effect has no desire of his own, linked to his social condition, as men of the lower classes have. He is attached to exactly the same things as his superiors, but without being able to obtain them. This draws him into a spiral of violence that is, inseparably, violence towards the dominant group and their values and violence towards himself.

The principal characteristic of *ressentiment*, the ailment of failed intellectuals, of which paranoia is the outer limit, is thus that it engenders dissatisfaction and then rebelliousness detached from any real object. Having an existential character, as it were, these feelings can neither be satisfied nor thwarted by the usual means, which are either those of repression – the defence of private interests assured

by violence on the part of the state – or the granting of advantages of a strictly economic nature. In the face of popular demands, insurrections and violence, the members of the governing class and the bourgeoisie have acquired, or believe they have acquired, a kind of savoir-faire that finds solid theoretical support, moreover, in utilitarian morality and political economics. Once one has understood what 'the people' want (and what they want always has to do with material things), one can put an end to a disturbance by a skilful mix of repression and satisfaction (the latter usually on secondary points). Riots are no more exempt than crimes from the grasp of calculation. But in the face of men moved by the passion of *ressentiment* and by a gnawing self-hatred engendered by failure, prudent management of public affairs becomes very difficult.

The trope of paranoia is thus associated, through the intermediary of the ressentiment that affects downgraded intellectuals, with the trope of nihilism as embodied by anarchism. European literature of the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth granted a place of the highest rank to the figure of the anarchist, a rank out of proportion with the relatively secondary role played by anarchist movements during that period. Thus in Fictions de l'anarchisme, the most detailed analysis we have of the relation between anarchism and literature in the late nineteenth century,8 Uri Eisenzweig shows that the fascination exercised over the media and over writers by the 'anarchist peril' (2001: 27) preceded the 1882-4 wave of bombings. The powers in place responded by adopting 'villainous laws' (lois scélérates), in Émile Pouget's expression (2008 [1899]), in 1893 and 1894. The goal of these laws was not only to punish acts and 'direct provocations', but also so-called 'indirect provocations' and 'apologias'; thus they lashed out at free speech and targeted not only the authors of attacks but journalists or writers who were deemed favourable to the anarchists and also to the socialists, or who were seen as manifesting 'sympathy' or even tolerance towards those groups.

These fictional anarchists and nihilists lack solid documentary foundations. Even when the portrait is presented as realistic – as in Conrad's case, for instance – it is above all metaphysical. In the novels in question, anarchists are characterized by the ambivalent position they occupy with respect to the class structure. They are above all characters who have dropped in social standing, and this downgrading is represented as the origin of the *ressentiment* that motivates them and drives them to nihilism: in other words, to a desire for total destruction based on a generalized hatred which is the

projection onto society of a self-hatred that cannot be seen for what it is. In this portrait, the relation to studies, to culture and knowledge, thus occupies a central place. The nihilist anarchist may have come from an honourable family belonging to respectable society and may have had a solid education, but he has not succeeded in occupying a corresponding social position for reasons that most often have to do with the circumstances of his position in the kinship group that have deprived this potential heir of his inheritance: either his family has been ruined, or he has been disinherited for some reason, or he is the youngest son, or illegitimate. He is thus presented as endowed with uncommon intelligence, knowledge and culture, but these exceptional capacities are entirely at the service of evil, hatred and destruction (this is the case for Moriarty, for example, in the Sherlock Holmes stories). But nihilist anarchists can also emerge from the lower classes: they have managed to acquire a rudimentary culture and a partial stock of knowledge on their own, or by taking evening courses offered by workers' organizations, or by profiting from the inconsistency of modern societies, which allowed them access to the lower levels of university study but sent them out with diplomas that are worthless on the labour market. The gap between the youthful aspirations of these men and their impoverished social condition makes them bitter, scornful, aggressive, pretentious, envious creatures, always ready to overestimate their own abilities. It also leads them to look down on those who occupy modest but honourable positions in society and play useful roles according to their merits, their work and their use of calculating reason, which allows them to envisage realistically what they can count on, given limited capacities and means.

For a closer look at this very widespread thematics, let us look at a book that prefigures the developments of espionage fiction after 1914: Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* (1997 [1907]), a work that must have been particularly important to the author since he used it as the basis for a play in 1919 and republished it in 1920 with a preface responding to the critiques that had followed its initial publication. *The Secret Agent*, which was published almost simultaneously with *L'homme du ressentiment*, illustrates in exemplary fashion the way in which the *topoi* of *ressentiment*, paranoia and loss of social standing were associated, at the dawn of the twentieth century, with fear of revolution and horror of revolutionaries.

The incident on which the novel hinges was the aborted attempt to bomb the Greenwich Observatory on 15 February 1894, probably – according to the notes that accompany the French translation – organized or planned by Fenians (members of an Irish-American

movement for Irish independence), but attributed in the novel to anarchists. The main character, Verloc, who runs a seedy pornography shop, is a double agent who belongs to an anarchist society, The Future of the Proletariat, but is also secretly in the employ of a foreign power (presumably Russia) to which he transmits information about the subversive activities of his associates. At the beginning of the novel, Verloc is summoned to the offices of the London embassy of the power that pays for his services. An embassy attaché, Vladimir, described as a dandy and 'something of a favorite of society' (Conrad 1997 [1907]: 119) in London, informs him that he will no longer be paid if he and his friends do not accomplish some startling acts - that is, some particularly newsworthy attacks – that will shake up the lax British government, 'with its sentimental regard for individual liberty' (127), and lead it to adopt 'universal repressive legislation' against all those who promote 'the social revolution'. Vladimir maintains that 'these outrages need not be especially sanguinary' because causing blood to flow, even that of crowned heads and other prominent people, has become commonplace and is attributed to 'social revenge', viewed as 'almost conventional'. Bourgeois sensibilities have been blunted. It is necessary, Vladimir says, to strike the 'fetish of the hour that all the bourgeoisie recognise' (128–9). Now, this fetish is nothing other than 'science'. Only an attempt against science, which lies 'outside the ordinary passions of humanity', can be considered 'purely destructive' and can make it entirely clear that the anarchists are 'perfectly determined to make a clean sweep of the whole social creation'. An attack on science 'of destructive ferocity so absurd as to be incomprehensible, inexplicable, almost unthinkable' thus constitutes the nihilistic act par excellence that will silence the 'howl from all those intellectual idiots'. The 'gratuitous blasphemy' would consist in throwing 'a bomb into pure mathematics'. But since that is impossible, Vladimir opts instead for an attack on astronomy (130–1).

Verloc sets out to mobilize the 'gang' under his control in order to achieve this goal. Three anarchists are the gang's central figures. Karl Yundt is an old 'terrorist' whose 'impotent fierceness' resembles 'the excitement of a senile sensualist'. He calls himself a 'destroyer' without 'pity for anything on earth' (138). Michaelis is a dreamer and a theoretician, a 'ticket-of-leave apostle'. He has come out of a 'highly hygienic prison round like a tub'; he is protected by 'a very wealthy woman [who] had sent him for a cure to Marienbad' (137). Finally, Alexander Ossipon, 'nicknamed the Doctor', is an 'ex-medical student without a degree', with 'a flattened nose and a prominent mouth . . . of the negro type'. He functions as a 'wandering

lecturer to working-men's associations about the socialistic aspect of hygiene'. He has 'that glance of insufferable and hopelessly dense self-sufficiency which nothing but the frequentation of science can give to the dullness of common mortals' (140–1). What unites this human refuse is nothing but *ressentiment* and laziness:

Mr Verloc, temperamentally identical with his associates, drew fine distinctions in his mind on the strength of insignificant differences. He drew them with a certain complacency, because the instinct of conventional respectability was strong within him, being only overcome by his dislike of all kinds of recognised labour – a temperamental defect which he shared with a large proportion of revolutionary reformers of a given social state. For obviously one does not revolt against the advantages and opportunities of that state, but against the price which must be paid for the same in the coin of accepted morality, self-restraint, and toil. The majority of revolutionists are the enemies of discipline and fatigue mostly. There are natures too, to whose sense of justice the price exacted looms up monstrously enormous, odious, oppressive, worrying, humiliating, extortionate, intolerable. These are the fanatics. The remaining portion of social rebels is accounted for by vanity, the mother of all noble and vile illusions, the companion of poets, reformers, charlatans, prophets, and incendiaries. (Conrad 1997 [1907]: 147)

From individual pathology to social pathology

In Max Scheler's work we have seen how ressentiment could characterize both individuals and societies, even modernity as a whole. This perspective derives from approaches centred on *culture*, a philosopheme inherited from German idealism, which developed at the confluence between phenomenology and sociology in the first third of the twentieth century. These approaches were partially continued by cultural anthropology and by American social psychology, starting in the 1930s; they were associated with new ideas taken from psychoanalysis and from an old characterology that was still very present in the fields of medicine and psychiatry. In this context, the notion of character can be used to go back and forth between individuals (the character belonging to each individual person) and society (the national character, the spirit of a people or of a culture, and so on). And just as there are pathologies associated with individual characters, there may be cultures that have a pathological character overall. An example featuring paranoia can be seen in Ruth Benedict's foundational book *Patterns of Culture*, published in 1934.

Characterology seeks to devise a method that can situate every individual within a general matrix of characteristics (opposing 'choleric', for example, to 'passionate', or 'sentimental' to 'phlegmatic'); it illustrates these various types by referring to historical figures presumed to embody them (Danton vs. Louis XIV, Robespierre vs. Kant, and so on). Characterologists may also seek to associate these psychic types with somatic types, as Ernst Kretschmer does (1999 [1931]). Similarly, for Ruth Benedict, 'we must imagine a great arc on which are arranged the possible interests' from which each culture would select some segments (1989 [1934]: 24). Thus the 'cultural pattern of every civilisation' makes 'use of certain segments of the great arc of potential human purposes and motivations' (237). From Benedict's standpoint, each culture thus presents something like a characteristic fundamental psychological tendency, which can be identified both by drawing up the repertory of the 'civilisation' in question as manifested by the entire set of cultural productions of a given society (the locus of this activity being, par excellence, the ethnographic museum) and by studying the way of being and the 'habit-patterns' of each individual taken separately (55).

To characterize the fundamental psychological tendencies of the two American Indian cultures on which her study focused, that of the Hopi of New Mexico and that of the Kwakiutl of the coastal regions of the American Northwest, Benedict relied – in a rather surprising way, it must be said – on a work she seems to have admired greatly, Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* (53–5). The originality of Spengler's analysis consists, according to Benedict, in distinguishing between two 'different forms' of 'western civilisation' corresponding to two great ideas of destiny: the 'Apollonian idea of the classical world, and the Faustian idea of the modern world' (here it is not hard to recognize the categories introduced by Nietzsche in The Birth of Tragedy). Benedict borrows these categories to describe the Apollonian character of the Pueblo Indians on the one hand, and the 'Dionysian' character of the Kwakiutl Indians on the other. But she also sometimes uses the term 'paranoia' to characterize the features of Kwakiutl culture and the character of the individuals who are immersed in that culture. In her view, paranoia thus underlies the permanent manifestations of rivalry and envy in the culture, the quarrelsome arrogance, the passionate search for greatness, the inability to face frustration and so on. The 'institutions' of this people can thus be understood as 'instances of cultural paranoia' (Benedict 1989) [1934]: 243).

Once the passage from the individual to the collective had been

traced and given a theoretical foundation, references to paranoia, which had previously been treated as an individual illness, could reveal the social and political dimensions underlying the identification of the pathology, as we have seen. A 'scientific' footing made it legitimate, then, to bring the term 'paranoia' out of the psychiatrist's office, to identify revolutionaries with madmen and revolutions with types of 'intoxication' or collective 'delirium'. The idea was of course banal, endlessly reiterated from Edmund Burke through Hippolyte Taine and Augustin Cochin to François Furet. But this central element of revisionist history¹⁰ had acquired new dignity. During the course of the 'revolutionary cycle' that went from 1789 in France to 1917 in Russia, one can always see at work the same type of 'personalities' presenting the same pathological features. Robespierre, Saint-Just and Babeuf offer typical examples of 'paranoid temperaments'. But we can also go back to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, viewed as the revolutionaries' inspiration; many learned analyses – whether by psychiatrists¹¹ or by literary types smitten with psychiatry – have recognized in Rousseau the very stereotype of the 'paranoid' individual. In Rousseau's case, this psychological disposition is attributed sometimes to the ressentiment proper to the autodidact intellectual of 'modest' origins, sometimes to a sexual disorder.

The psychiatricization of the old thematics of intellectuals who had lost their social standing could then be expressed unambiguously. The 'feathered scoundrels', as Edmund Burke called them (Burke 1818: 9, 49), members of the schools of thought Augustin Cochin held responsible for the worst atrocities, were not only 'social visionaries', intoxicated by the 'universalist' passion and devoid of all 'practical experience', who wove 'chimerical theories' and developed 'fanatical hatred for the existing order, described as criminal and unjust'. They too were mentally ill. Thus Dominique Losurdo – from whom I am borrowing this analysis of revisionist history – adds that 'the conflict between different social classes became a struggle between health and madness', so that 'central moments of modern and contemporary history' were 'reduced to simple chapters of psychopathology' (2006: 94).

Liberalism, or else . . . paranoia

The establishment of a position from which political history can be reinterpreted in terms of an opposition between rationality and irrationality, and even between mental illness and normality, is to a

large extent the work of American liberal intellectuals – often political scientists occupying academic posts – during the 1950s, that is, during the period in which Americans were confronting both communism and McCarthyism and then the neo-conservative offensive that accompanied Barry Goldwater's presidential campaign. This is when the terms 'paranoia' and 'paranoid' began to be widely used to characterize political behaviours considered in both their individual and collective manifestations. The new conceptual arsenal forged during that decade made it possible to bring together different forms of 'extremism' located at the opposite poles of the political spectrum, that is, associated with the far left or the far right, and even to bring them into convergence. Thus one could put implacable adversaries back to back, by showing that seemingly opposite ideologies seduced actors endowed with a common 'political psychology' that stemmed from their social position or, in the terms of these theories, from their 'status'. The notion of 'paranoid style' played a role in this process similar in some respects to that of 'totalitaranism', 12 and in other respects to that of 'populism'. 13

Richard Hofstadter's still-celebrated book, The Paranoid Style in American Politics, 14 played an important role in the spread of the idea that the model of paranoia as mental illness could constitute an effective operator, at least on the metaphorical level, for identifying, describing and condemning a certain way of engaging in political struggles. Later, in response to critiques of his work, Hofstadter claimed that he had not intended to develop any sort of social psychiatry. By forging the expression 'paranoid style', he said, he had used this term 'much as a historian of art might speak of the baroque or the mannerist style' (2008b: 4). Nevertheless, if we recall the intellectual origins of his ideas and review his own ideological evolution, we can see clearly what his project owes to the encounter between a political conjuncture and schemas that stem more or less from psychoanalysis, if not from psychiatry properly speaking (although it is not certain that the two were sharply distinguished at the time) - schemas that were then being absorbed by American social psychology and sociology.

As a university student, Hofstadter took up Marxism and was even a member of the American Communist Party for a short time. His first book, published in 1944, is a testimony to that period; it was devoted to social Darwinism – an expression that Hofstadter helped introduce into the social sciences – in American ideology (1992 [1944]). After the war, he taught history at Columbia; like many intellectuals who had at first been close to the extreme left, he rejoined the

academics who were attempting to give liberalism new foundations by interpreting it in the tradition of American radicalism and in the spirit of the New Deal, to which Hofstadter maintained a lifelong attachment. His intellectual history of the political conceptions of the Founding Fathers (Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln, and others) had a major impact (Hofstadter 1948). At Columbia, Hofstadter gravitated towards the social sciences and developed intellectual relationships with such scholars as Daniel Bell, Seymour Martin Lipset and David Riesman. He read Max Weber and Freud but also Karl Mannheim and the philosophers of the Frankfurt School, many of whom had emigrated to the United States during the war.

It is difficult to date *The Paranoid Style* because it is a collection of articles initially published between the mid-1950s, when the first essay on the theme appeared, and the mid-1960s, when that first essay was included in the book in a revised form, along with others on related themes. During this ten-year period, Hofstadter participated actively in the struggle of liberal intellectuals against the rise of the American extreme right, from Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s to Barry Goldwater in the 1960s (he made important contributions to collective works on the radical right and its anti-intellectualism [Hofstadter 1963]). At the same time, he continued to be firmly anchored in the anti-communism that followed the short communist episode of his youth, although he was strongly opposed to the delusional anti-communism manifested by the American right in the 1960s.

The Paranoid Style was inspired partly by the American radical liberal tradition, partly by Weber and Freud, and even more by Mannheim and Adorno. From the tradition of radical liberalism, Hofstadter took up the idea that a healthy nation allows pluralism, protects intellectual liberties, and sets up a rampart against extremists, when they succumb to their irrationalist, anti-intellectual, invasive and schematic tendencies (in today's France they would be called *intégristes*). From Max Weber, the author borrowed the notion of social status and the link between certain types of statuses and certain types of beliefs, especially political beliefs ('status politics'). From Mannheim, he retained the idea that fictions – that is, ideologies - and eschatological dreams - that is, utopias - were rooted in the hidden, frustrated desires of individuals and peoples (Brown 2006: 92). But it was especially in Theodor Adorno's The Authoritarian Personality (Adorno et al. 1982 [1950]) that Hofstadter found the idea of developing a social critique based on a social psychology that used psychoanalytical and/or psychiatric categories. Adorno's work helped liberate him from his earlier progressive faith in the political

consciousness of the proletariat, which he came to see as no more clairvoyant than, for example, the self-described 'moral majority' that recognized its aspirations in Goldwater's political programme.

To designate that radical right, Hofstadter uses the term 'pseudo-conservative revolt' – borrowed from Adorno – in order to stress the pseudo-traditionalism of the tendencies that betrayed the American tradition and that, even while 'denying their own radicalism', were imbued with 'fanaticism' and based their political positions on 'a feeling of persecution', a fear of 'imminent political disaster' and an obsession with 'communist subversion'. This last term was used in a very broad sense, for it was meant to include, among the covert agents of the international communist conspiracy, Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy, both accused of diverting funds required for the national defence to aid for the poor. Hofstadter used the term 'populism' to describe what brought together the nostalgia for an imaginary American past which was very prevalent in particular among poor whites in rural areas, and the anti-statism of one segment of the political elite, eager to undo the New Deal.

Hofstadter views these political behaviours as symptomatic of a psychological disorder he terms paranoid. The word can qualify both particular individuals and political trends or social groups. Paranoia is in effect treated as a specific way of envisaging political life that is apt to manifest itself individually or collectively, under any circumstances whatsoever: it is a tendency of the human spirit. In The Paranoid Style, the originality of the rhetorical procedure consists in the way the author unveils the deep psychological tendencies underlying the positions of the 'pseudo-conservative revolt' while keeping his distance from the ongoing conflicts, so as to constitute a series of historical examples that are very diverse in their contexts, in their contents, and in the characteristics of the designated enemies and the accusations addressed to them. This universalizing and ahistorical perspective allows Hofstadter to juxtapose figures from the extreme right and the extreme left. The final version of The Paranoid Style more pointedly emphasizes the 'important part . . . played [in contemporary right-wing movements] by ex-Communists who have moved rapidly, though not without anguish, from the paranoid left to the paranoid right, clinging all the while to the fundamentally Manichean psychology that underlies both' (35). Hofstadter's essay refers in this context in particular to the Millenarist sects of the Middle Ages; to the repressive movements against Masons, Catholics (Jesuits in particular) and the Illuminati; to certain strands of the abolitionist movement that talked about 'a slaveholders' conspiracy'; to the left-

wing denunciation of 'a great conspiracy of international bankers' or 'a munitions makers' conspiracy' (9) to explain what triggered the First World War; to the racist components of American society (first and foremost the Ku Klux Klan); and also, of course, in more recent times, to McCarthyism and its communist adversary.

Hofstadter thus identifies a 'paranoid style' that can be adopted for the defence of very different sorts of causes. Just as paranoia itself had been constructed in the form of a mental illness with an organic basis that was consequently apt to appear in any socio-historical context whatsoever, the 'paranoid style' can be considered a universal model of political pathologies, making it possible to interpret movements occurring in different places throughout the world or in historical periods centuries apart. These pathologies have in common the fact that the primary enemy they identify is a collective whose existence may be real but whose quasi-demoniacal power is overestimated, as is the capacity of its members to act in a deliberately coordinated and concerted way so as to implement secret plans with a broad scope aimed at achieving absolute power. And the pathologies also confer on the defenders of the endangered order the character of solitary heroes, chosen, wholly good, ridiculed and even persecuted by all but nevertheless confident in their ultimate triumph.

But we must also note that, in the same operation, Hofstadter helps to sketch out – in intaglio, as it were – and to consolidate the position from which one can identify and denounce the belief in the existence of gigantic, diabolical conspiracies that takes hold of people under certain historical conditions, even while treating this belief as though it were an atemporal psychological propensity. As unconvinced or critical commentators remarked very quickly (Brown 2006: 148–51), what is problematic about Hofstadter's analyses is the solidity of the position from which they are developed and whether the perspective implied in that position is external, one of overview, a position the social sciences would term 'objective', or whether it is simply one point of view among others, itself also associated with traditions, interests and prejudices. If one is going to treat a large number of political behaviours distributed between the far left and the far right as irrational and even pathological, one must be able to provide solid footing for the position from which such a judgement can be made, viewed both as an 'objective' epistemological position and as a political position capable of embodying rationality and normality.

Hofstadter's analyses have thus been criticized from both positions at issue, the far left and the far right, as no less relative, partial and partisan than the ones they denounce. Being in no way absolute, in

the eyes of his critics, his analyses too are merely the expression of one political option among others, or, worse, of personal bias. On what foundation, asks the far-right John Birch Society, can he base a position that consists in relegating to irrationality and pathology the political choices of twenty-five million Americans who reject radical ultra-liberalism and demand the restoration of their traditional values? Such critiques were reinforced when it was revealed that Hofstadter's work had received financial support from the CIA via the Ford Foundation in the mid-1950s, in order to push back against the rise of the extreme right. The same thing occurred in Europe, moreover, until the mid-1960s: through the intermediary of the same foundation, the French Congrès pour la liberté de la culture (Congress for Freedom of Culture) also received CIA funding, with the goal of encouraging the formation of a group of anti-communist intellectuals who could not be accused of indulgence towards the far right (Brown 2006: 150).

By using categories borrowed from psychopathology to characterize political choices and values to which large numbers of persons were committed, Hofstadter's work reactivated some of the contradictions of representative democracy. In contrasting masses whose irrational tendencies are taken in hand by irresponsible or even perverse political entrepreneurs with reasonable individuals who act in the solitude of the voting booth to relinquish their power to competent experts, Hofstadter's analysis raises the question of the relation between intellectual elites and political elites, that is, the question of who is capable of representing the people, of translating their aspirations and governing them. Now, that question is at the heart of liberalism. Developing from the outset an anthropology that conflated access to full humanity with citizenship and with the exercise of political capabilities, liberalism came up against the problem of distinguishing between those who are competent and those who are not. For a long time, as we know, the latter category (without even mentioning the non-human beings whom humans today are trying to bring into politics [Latour 2004 (1999)]), included for a long time not only the mentally deficient, the mentally ill and children, whom liberalism can see only as future citizens (Arneil 2002), but also women. In this political metaphysics, the question of representation is central. The truly 'human' human being, that is, one who is capable of being politically relevant, is not so much someone who can choose to be represented by others as someone who is capable of representing those others. A human being - 'in the full sense of the term', as the saying goes - is a potential representative. In this context, the

principal threat to democracies is thus embodied by the existence of masses who have the right to choose their representatives but whose individual members are not competent to represent them, and who hand over their power blindly to unworthy politicians.

But while Hofstadter's argument may be somewhat weak theoretically, it turned out to be quite powerful in practice, acting as an attractor at the confluence of the social sciences and politics because it could lean both on the recollection of the Nazi horrors and on the growing impossibility of ignoring the revelations about Stalin's camps. It thus played an important role in the renewal of liberalism and in the establishment of an irrefutable position that was expressed by movements such as the European 'second left', defined especially in the negative by the double rejection of the far right and the far left. But it also helped construct – in the form of a problem difficult to implant on the theoretical level, owing in particular to the association between paranoia and populism – a theme that has continued to be developed ever since, especially in the field of political science: the theme embodied in critical analyses as 'conspiracy theories'. The boundaries of this category are fuzzy, as we shall see, but its centre is occupied by two good examples in Eleanor Rosch's sense (Rosch 1977): (1) a conspiracy between capitalism and Jews and anarchocommunists, denounced by fascists; and (2) a conspiracy between capitalism and the ruling classes and the intellectual elites, denounced by self-styled orthodox Marxists.

The epidemic of paranoia

During the decades that followed the publication of Hofstadter's essay, the term 'paranoia' entered into common usage – even as it was gradually disappearing from the vocabulary of psychiatry – and the question of paranoia became a topos in political journalism and political science. At the same time, another expression began to be used frequently to designate the kind of misstep that characterized social 'paranoids': 'conspiracy theory' (whose repercussions in the realm of sociology we shall examine in the following chapter). This expression appeared in the 1950s and was used more and more often during the decades that followed; it comes up so frequently that it is almost impossible to produce an exhaustive bibliography of the works – especially in English – that have been devoted over the last thirty years or so to the questions of paranoia and 'conspiracy theory'. Innumerable journalistic accounts, popular treatments and scholarly

works (in many of which learned analyses dissect the proceedings of international conferences) have been devoted to 'Conspiracy Theory', which today constitutes a recognized research theme and almost a new academic discipline. Conspiracy theories and paranoia thus seem to have become major problems: for actors in daily life, and especially professional life, who are subject to accusations, manoeuvres and persecutions that they deem abusive; for journalists who transmit those accusations; and, finally, for political scientists who perceive the spread of paranoia and the multiplication of conspiracy theories as significant risks to democratic life, and who seek to describe and to 'understand' the phenomenon.

In this literature, the term 'conspiracy theory' does not simply designate one particular theory among others; it always includes an accusation. A conspiracy theory is a theory that is not only false but dangerous: a paranoid theory. Accusations of this sort emerged during the 1950s, in relation to the Cold War, and then developed over the course of the decades that followed the movements of revolt during the late 1960s, movements associated in France with May '68 but elsewhere - and especially in the United States - with the war in Vietnam and, on a worldwide scale, with the Israel-Palestine conflict. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, they attained an unprecedented amplitude that was often associated with the aftermath of September 11, 2001, and/or with the development of the internet. It would be hard to find an area today, on the margins of political life properly speaking, in which intersecting accusations of conspiracy, conspiracy theory or paranoia are not exchanged. Whether it is a matter of economic governance, with the revelation of hidden agencies of concertation among the powerful of the world; of health and medicine (for example, regarding the origins of the AIDS virus or the illnesses imputed to the weapons used during the Gulf War from which veterans of that war still suffer); of science, for example meteorology and climate change (where certain accusations of conspiracy theories seek to spread the belief that warming cannot be attributed to human activities, while others make the opposite charges¹⁷); of the Catholic Church (often in connection with Opus Dei); not to mention the stories which, on the margins of UFOlogy, dramatize culpable relations between human rulers and non-human invaders or observers from other planets (for example, the Roswell incident).¹⁸

The focus on allegations of conspiracy and the interest of journalists and academics in conspiracy theories are also tied to the development of these themes in fiction, especially from the 1970s on.

Indeed, these are major themes not only in popular literature but also in more ambitious fiction (for example, in the work of Don DeLillo or Bret Easton Ellis). They are also prominent in films (where there are countless examples: consider *The Matrix*, which has been discussed extensively by academic philosophers) and especially in television series, of which *The Prisoner* (a British series from 1967–8) and *The X-Files* (a Canadian–American series that ran originally from 1993 to 2002) have become emblematic. There are now a number of academic studies, written by specialists in literature or in the media rather than by political scientists, that take fictional representations of conspiracies as their object, or that mix fictional representations and cases presented as real in their analyses, without a very clear boundary line between them.

Moreover, the academic interest in conspiracy theories, the multiplication of fictions that dramatize conspiracies or accusations of conspiracy and the propensity of so-called ordinary people to believe in the existence of conspiracies have presumably maintained circular relationships, as is the case every time a field of representation is established. It is thus hard to know whether the belief in conspiracies on the part of large numbers of people has actually grown in considerable proportions in recent decades, as many scholars have claimed. Longitudinal studies would be required to shore up this position, but these have not been initiated as yet, and it is hard to see how they could be carried out, especially as regards the past. It is thus possible that the surge in conspiracy theories, attesting to a worldwide paranoia epidemic at the level of a major problem, is above all an effect of representation: that is, on the one hand, effects of circularity like those evoked above, and, on the other, an effect of the multiplication of media, especially of those virtually accessible to everyone, such as the internet, which makes available to a vast public beliefs that had previously circulated only within small closed groups. We should note in passing that it is often the same persons – usually highly qualified intellectuals - who, in order to condemn Facebook, for example, or (especially) Wikileaks, expound on the moral and social value of secrecy, particularly state secrecy, and who, taking offence at the denunciations of conspiracy that they find as they surf the internet, denounce an epidemic of paranoia. It is not easy to determine whether their indignation stems from the beliefs to which they have had access through the intermediary of this medium (which they are of course free not to consult if they want to avoid being shocked) or from the fact that these beliefs are no longer confined to small, intimate groups but have been disclosed to the public at large.

We must note at the same time that the anxiety aroused among these self-styled elites by the over-abundant presence of downgraded and frustrated intellectuals – which we began to note early in the twentieth century – has hardly disappeared, but it now tends to converge with critiques of the internet. This new interactive medium, because it does not allow those in possession of knowledge (and who are paid to know) to control access to the public diffusion of facts and ideas, is perceived as having opened up a limitless space in which anyone can begin to circulate delusional ideas. By the same token, people no longer believe blindly in what the competent experts say, and anyone can present counter-examples or counter-opinions drawn from the internet; this, too, is harmful to real truth and real democracy. Everyone believes in anything at all, and no one believes in anything. According to these neo-conservative thinkers, we are witnessing the return of nihilism . . .

How can conspiracy theories be identified?

In this abundant and often redundant literature, we can distinguish five types of partially overlapping works. The first, which are intent on denouncing the harmful effects of conspiracy theories, are presented as collections of anecdotes and case studies (often gleaned from the internet) related to the contemporary world (for example, Aaronovitch 2009). Each of the cases included illustrates the way in which half-educated or half-insane people spread far-fetched notions (for example, the belief that the televised images showing the first man on the moon were rigged), when they are not potentially criminal (for example, the belief in a worldwide Islamic plot driven ultimately by the devil). The works in the second group focus on the way conspiracy theories have permeated fiction, literature in general, films and especially television (for example, Dean 1998; Arnold 2008). Works in the third group, more ambitious, take it upon themselves to describe the invasive current 'culture' of conspiracy as manifested in 'true' stories drawn from contemporary social and political life, as well as in fiction, either in the United States (for example, Goldberg 2001) or in the world as a whole, in response to globalization (for example, West and Sanders 2003; Taguieff 2005: 23-6). In the latter case, the principal explanation is the consternation of the masses faced with a universe that has become incomprehensible, either because in reality it does not obey any known rule or because the possibility of creating a representation of it has been affected by the disappearance of the

principal interpretive schemas at work during the twentieth century, Marxism in particular (Jameson 1991).

Essays of a fourth type set out to give historical depth to the idea of conspiracy theory. They focus on accusations of conspiracy taken from European or American history in earlier periods so as to show that paranoia and belief in conspiracy constitute psychological tendencies characteristic of human beings in general. These tendencies are apt to be aroused in very different historical situations, in which it is nevertheless possible to identify structurally similar social contexts, marked for example by the appearance of eschatological or revolutionary movements, by confrontation with people who have come from elsewhere, or by a gap between the culture of oppressed masses and the culture of elites. Conspiracies are then identified as the work of 'the favourites', 'the heretics', 'the Masons', 'the speculators', 'the Catholics' (among Protestants), 'the Jesuits' (Cubitt 1993), 'the lepers', who were said to poison wells in medieval Catalonia (Nirenberg 2001), or else they are attributed to specific political contexts (the 'Tumult of Amboise', the 'gunpowder plot', the 'Glorious Revolution' or the 'foreign conspiracy' during the French Revolution [Coward and Swann 2004]).

Finally, in a fifth type of work, we find efforts to avoid uncritical endorsements of the dominant thesis according to which we are currently witnessing an epidemic of paranoia. Some of these studies set out to analyse the systems of logic that are usually associated with paranoia, either on the individual level – by examining the itineraries of persons accused of developing paranoid behaviours and the conflicts in which they have been involved and that might have been the source of their trouble (Lemert 1962) – or on the collective level. In the latter case, affinities are brought to light between behaviours deemed abnormal in certain contexts and judged normal in others, especially in the context of scientific research (Marcus 1999). Other works, more theoretically oriented, focus on the notion of conspiracy theory itself; seeking to move beyond the exclusive register of denunciation, they strive to clarify and problematize it. From these studies, we can borrow a sort of analytics of conspiracy theory that stresses the conditions of utterance in which this reference appears. Viewed this way, references to conspiracy theories recall in some respects accusations of sorcery as they have been analysed by Jeanne Favret-Saada (1980) or, in history, by Carlo Ginzburg (1985 [1966]). First, the term 'conspiracy theory' is always associated with an accusation. No one claims authorship of a conspiracy theory. Belief in such a theory is always attributed to an other. A second feature of such

references involves the reflexive modalities that accompany them. They are always of the form 'I know perfectly well, but even so ...', a form analysed by Octave Mannoni in a celebrated article from 1964 (republished in 2006 with numerous commentaries). Thus, practically every work devoted to conspiracy theory is preceded with a formula of the following type: 'I know, of course, that conspiracies exist. Even so, I am going to talk about something else, that is, the pathological manifestations that conspiracy theories constitute.' Conversely, the actors targeted by such accusations often introduce their utterances with a similar formula: 'I am well aware that I shall be accused of presenting a conspiracy theory. Even so, it is undeniable that . . .' A third point involves the difference in social position between those who denounce conspiracy theories and those who are accused of spreading such theories. The former are usually academics, intellectuals or journalists with a college education; the latter tend to be self-educated. It is thus hard to establish any coincidence, when it comes to phenomena described as stemming from paranoia and conspiracy theory, between what can be said about them when they are approached from below and what can be said when they are approached from above. The first approach entails conducting an inquiry among the actors or groups involved, for example those who are engaged in what I have elsewhere called affairs (Boltanski 2012) [1990]: 169–77) and who denounce the conspiracies of which they are victims. With the second approach, authors typically accumulate a large number of cases and treat them as expressions of a single phenomenon, envisaging paranoia and conspiracy theory as global phenomena, deeming them either ahistorical or, more often, characteristic of our own time and of the anxieties that permeate it.

The problem, for theorists who for the most part think that there is actually such a thing as an object apt to be qualified as a conspiracy theory, is how to trace a clear line of demarcation that makes it possible to distinguish 'real' conspiracies from 'imaginary' ones. On one side, to take some classic examples, we have Watergate (political scientists generally agree that it has been proved that President Nixon ordered manoeuvres aimed at interrupting the course of justice), and on the other we have the accusation that, since the 1950s, successive United States presidents have ordered manoeuvres intended to hide from the public the fact that corpses of extraterrestrial beings had indeed been discovered at Roswell, New Mexico, and then concealed. It is moreover around the latter sort of story, deemed extravagant by conventional academics who generally discount the possibility that extraterrestrials are present among us, that works

aiming to denounce conspiracy theories and the development of an invasive culture of conspiracy are polarized. The problem is that there are numerous cases between the two extremes about which it is difficult to decide, even from the viewpoint of an impartial academic situated 'above the fray', whether one is confronting a 'real' or an 'imaginary' conspiracy.

Was John Kennedy really killed by a single gunman with a single bullet, for example? The question remains more or less unresolved. Did Lee Harvey Oswald, who was killed the day after his arrest by Jack Ruby, as the Warren Commission determined, really act alone (the so-called 'single killer' theory), or should the assassination of the president of the United States be attributed to a conspiracy involving a small or a large number of persons? As we know, a great many actors have addressed this issue, some of them with an official mandate (these tend to belong to the category of policemen) and others, mere amateurs, acting on their own, like the detectives we focused on earlier. It should be noted that the explanations and justifications brought to bear by both groups invoke the same positivist and even scientistic spirit. In this affair, each of the parties seeks to base its conclusions on material evidence or testimony. Those who defend the 'single killer' thesis stress the role of chance in the way the crime was committed (Oswald had got a job in the building from which he fired before the president's trip was planned; Ruby found himself by chance in the city where Oswald was killed, before the moment for Oswald's transfer was set; and so on). As for those who assert the existence of a conspiracy, they base their claims chiefly on testimony that refers to more than three gunshots, which would presuppose the presence of more than one shooter; or else they invoke doubts about the precise timing of the shots, or they bring up the possibility that government agencies kept important elements hidden from the Warren Commission. As for the presumed instigators and beneficiaries of the plot, according to the conspiracy theories considered, they are quite diverse and not all equally plausible, at least for college-educated minds (they include the American far right, American financial milieus, the military-industrial complex, the CIA, the Mafia, Cuban exiles, Fidel Castro, Israel, former Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem, the KGB, Aristotle Onassis and a group of Illuminati and so on).²⁰

One could accumulate examples of this sort about which accusations of conspiracy have been raised owing to uncertainty as to what might really have happened or owing to challenges to the official versions of the events, which certain actors have deemed less than

credible.²¹ The challengers seek not only to modify the description of what took place but also and especially to intervene in the determination of causes, that is, in the identification of the entities to which the events in question can be attributed, thereby influencing the meaning of those events. Such reconfigurations may gradually come to affect the very tenor of reality as a whole, a reality that, paradoxically, tends to dissolve in the multiplicity of probing operations intended to make it hold together. The more acrimonious the polemic, the smaller the scale on which the components of the event in dispute – the angle of the shot, the impact of the bullets, some detail of an autopsy and so on – require the intervention of experts. Whether these experts have an official mandate or not, whether they are on the side of the version defended by the authorities or are independent – often selfproclaimed – supporters of the challengers, the data they supply are interpreted, once they are made public, as if they emanated from scientists discussing the results of an experiment. Now, the situations to which these data refer differ profoundly from experimental conditions in science, conditions whose chief property is that they have been intentionally set up so as to limit the field of hypotheses that can be proposed to interpret the results. When 'experts' intervene after the fact, once the event is over, they often have great difficulty reconstituting the context in which the event took place, even in its most factual dimensions (a wall will have been repainted, an object moved from one place to another and so on). In addition, in the case of experimentation, an artificial reality is set up so as to limit and control the multiform changes through which the world manifests itself when it is not under constraints. Conversely, in the case of the situations surrounding events, it may take sheer luck - and it is sometimes impossible – to gather enough elements to be able to distinguish between relevant *clues*, that is, indications linked by relations of causality to the 'facts' that someone is seeking to explain, and the modifications in the environment that are unrelated to the course of events in question.²²

What is a conspiracy?

One of the difficulties encountered by attempts to specify the meaning of 'conspiracy theory' has to do with the fuzzy nature of 'conspiracy' itself. Let us take for example the definition proposed by Peter Knight, one of the leading specialists in conspiracy theory (Knight 2000, 2002), in 'Making Sense of Conspiracy Theory', an introduc-

tion to the useful encyclopedia in which he includes the principal cases of accusations of conspiracy in US history since the American Revolution (Knight 2003: 15-24): 'A straightforward definition of a conspiracy is when a *small* group of *powerful people* combine together in secret to plan and carry out an illegal or improper action, particularly one that alters the course of events' (ibid.: 15, emphasis added). Practically every word in this definition is problematic, as Knight himself acknowledges. The size of the conspiracy at issue has often been taken into account in attempts to distinguish true conspiracies from those belonging to the conspiracy theory category. Thus, for example, Daniel Pipes (1997) and also Robert Robins and Jerold Post (1997) argue that there may well be 'little conspiracies' that involve a limited number of actors looking for specific advantages, but that conspiracy theory studies should focus on accusations that refer to 'worldwide conspiracies' – the ones that present real threats, as demonstrated by the role they played for example in Nazism and Stalinism. However, in many instances the distinction is hard to make, especially because the actors' power and social status have to be taken into account. If a conspiracy involves highly placed actors, it may be vast in scope even though the number of participants is small.

Taking up another term in Knight's definition, we may ask whether a conspiracy always involves *people*, that is, human beings. Many charges of conspiracy refer to the intervention of non-human entities such as supernatural beings, extraterrestrials or machines – especially computers, these days – that collaborate to gain power over humans. The qualifying term *powerful* is also problematic. Are the conspirators powerful because each of them holds some exceptional power (as in Agatha Christie's *The Big Four*, discussed in the previous chapter) or does the power they wield result simply from its aggregation within a single group of persons, each one individually weak but with strength multiplied by their connections?

The reference to *secrecy* cannot be taken for granted either. Conspirators may be bound to secrecy in the sense that all members vow on pain of death not to reveal the existence of the conspiracy in which they are participating. However, in many instances an alleged conspiracy entails relations that are more tacit than secret, even though they are not transparent or explicitly recognized in legal terms. Thus, someone who speaks of the 'ruling class' can be accused of referring to a kind of conspiracy. Or – to borrow another example from Knight – male domination can be depicted as a kind of conspiracy against women. However, we cannot thereby deduce that all members of the ruling class are in effect conspirators who coordinate

their actions in secret (we shall look at this issue in the next chapter), or that male conspiracy is a well-guarded secret with which all men are nevertheless acquainted. Moreover, there are secrets developed within large organizations – industrial secrets, and especially state secrets – that can be associated with conspiracies or not, depending on the way they are viewed.²³ The case of nuclear weapons offers numerous examples. We need only think of the Manhattan Project, the code name given in the United States to the enterprise of developing and building the first atomic bomb, which was completed in three years with the utmost secrecy, even though this vast undertaking employed more workers than the entire automobile industry during the same period (Hughes 2002) and required the participation of major industrial groups such as Du Pont de Nemours (Ndiaye 2001). Or we can look at the way the nuclear arms industry was established in Israel while the state denied its existence for many years.²⁴

The question of *coordination* ('combining together') and *planning* is even thornier. As Knight points out, it belongs to a significant problematics in discussions of conspiracy, that of agency.²⁵ Does reference to conspiracy necessarily presuppose explicit coordination and planning? After all, these are not the only ways of implementing an action. In most cases of alleged conspiracy, it proves difficult to bring to light a concerted plan that has been carried out to the letter by the actors involved and has achieved objectives defined in advance. This difficulty pertains, of course, to the typical examples of plots invoked by accusations of conspiracy theory. But the problem is that the same thing can be said about a large number of conspiracies deemed probable by academics, political scientists and historians. Since most of the time the actors' intentions remain inaccessible to investigators, especially when the inquiry is retrospective, the dilemma becomes whether to limit cases of conspiracy to situations in which the presence of precise intentions is avowed – in which case the instances become quite rare – or to extend the number of cases to include situations in which everything happens 'as if' such intentions (which are impossible to determine with precision) were present – in which case it becomes difficult to distinguish real conspiracies from imaginary ones. Reference to something on the order of an 'objective conspiracy' largely depends on the position of the person making the accusation, and that position can easily be challenged by invoking that person's presumed (malevolent) intention. For example, the accuser may see the results of a conspiracy in an event that, considered from a different viewpoint, can be seen as an uncoordinated outburst by an entire people (this is typically the initial reaction of the

powers that be when they are confronting a rebellion). But one can also object, conversely, that powerful interests are seeking to deny or to ridicule an accusation of conspiracy of which they are the target, simply to conceal the *connivance* that links them and that makes their connections something like an objective conspiracy.

The *illegal* character of a conspiracy is by no means self-evident, either. If illegality is a necessary feature of conspiracy, then we have to remove from the thematics of conspiracy any cases in which the state, or secret services dependent on the state, or spies, or counterspies, all belonging to and paid by official administrations, are implicated, even when the state itself is not accused of being 'totalitarian' or 'rogue' but is recognized as a state governed by the rule of law. Are not secrecy and conspiracy at the heart of the 'professional ideology' of the agents employed by intelligence services, as Alain Dewerpe says (1994: 17)? The criterion of illegality would be so constraining that it would eliminate most of the plots that figure in spy novels and in reports produced by investigative journalists. Only in limited cases, as Knight notes in examining this argument, does the action of agents carrying out clandestine operations on behalf of intelligence services take a truly illegal turn, in the sense that it deviates from the instructions passed down the hierarchical chain; the choice of describing these actions as illegal depends on the observer's bias. As for the always *improper* character of conspiracies, this is also subject to caution. Well-meaning conspiracies can exist in the context of interpersonal relationships, for example, to bring help to a person who is too proud to ask for it²⁶ or, in political society, to save innocent persons threatened with death.²⁷ As for conspiracies carried out by state services, they may be justified in invoking the common good even if they invoke a moral code designed to defend the state as a collective person – the Reason of state – which can thus transgress the rules of the ordinary morality that prevails in relationships between individuals (Gauchet 1994; Sfez 2000).

Finally, questions about the nature of the entities whose actions alter the course of events, and about the modalities of those actions, concern an issue that is at the heart not only of the problematics of conspiracy but also of the social sciences in general: historical causality. Without lingering over this issue for the moment, let us note that the occurrence of an event is not indispensable for a charge of conspiracy. There have presumably been enterprises recognized as conspiracies but that had little or no effect on the course of events (this is often the position adopted by sceptical researchers who recognize the existence of conspiracies but refuse to grant them any

historical or social importance). And it would seem that carrying out an action is not necessary for something to be called a conspiracy, if we consider the way the police justify the preventive arrest of persons among whom bonds are presumed to exist because they frequent the same places, for example, or have relationships in common.

As Knight himself remarks:

[i]t might, however, be the case that coming up with a label for the phenomenon actually invents the phenomenon itself, in the sense that a new conceptual category turns what otherwise would have been a set of possibly quite diverse ideas into a coherent style of thought.... [D]etermining what constitutes the phenomenon has become part of the phenomenon itself. (Knight 2003: 17)

How far should the inquiry go?

Other studies, falling under the umbrella of philosophy, seek to stabilize the definition of 'conspiracy theory'. 28 We shall examine one such study that undertakes to shift the question of distinguishing between real and imaginary conspiracies onto an 'epistemological' terrain where it overlaps with the distinction between acceptable and unacceptable theories. Brian Keeley begins an article devoted to this issue with an apocalyptic statement: 'The millennium is nigh, and with each passing year, the American consciousness is increasingly in the grip of conspiratorial thinking' (1999: 109). He proceeds with a litany of the most stereotypical types of conspiracy theories (extraterrestrial beings, secret societies controlling the global economy, viruses escaping from military laboratories and so on). Like his predecessors, Keeley wants to find criteria that make it possible to identify conspiracy theories (as opposed to everyday conspiracies, such as surprise parties) by clarifying our shared intuition as to what a conspiracy theory is ('unwarranted conspiracy theories', or UCTs). His approach is procedural rather than substantive. He defines a UCT as 'an explanation that runs counter to some received, official, or "obvious" account' (117). This type of explanation juxtaposes events that had previously seemed unrelated; it refers to secret dealings and relies on 'errant data', data that are 'unexplained in' or that contradict 'the received account' (118). UCTs derive their strength from the fact that their explanation is unified: they integrate accepted and errant data, treating the latter as though they had been intentionally ignored. Thus arguments against UCTs become arguments in their favour. The more arguments are advanced by authorities in support

of the official theory, the more conspiracy theorists see reasons to dismiss them. The problem, as Keeley rightly notes, is that 'the history of science is replete with examples of theoretical innovation initiated by an investigation into data that did not fit the standard paradigm' (120). But what distinguishes UCTs from science is that science deals with passive nature, whereas UCTs presuppose that some actors are determined to keep certain data secret and thus hinder the search for truth. By the same token, these data become unfalsifiable. Even so, Keeley adds, in many of the cases addressed by UCTs, there are good reasons to believe in the existence of forces that have motives for organizing disinformation campaigns and the means to do so. The criterion of unfalsifiability is thus acceptable only if we have good reason to think that there are no powerful agents attempting to misdirect our investigations. It follows that:

the problem with UCTs is not their unfalsifiability, but rather the increasing degree of scepticism required by such theories as positive evidence for the conspiracy fails to obtain. These theories throw into doubt the various institutions that have been set up to generate reliable data and evidence. In doing so, they reveal just how large a role trust – in both institutions and individuals – plays in the justification of our beliefs. (Keeley 1999: 121)

Even our belief in the truth of scientific pronouncements ultimately has no basis beyond our trust in the seriousness of scientific institutions. In the public sphere, too, there are institutions and mechanisms that can warrant firm beliefs: government agencies, for example, and a free press. But the logic of UCTs dictates that growing doubt – to a point approaching nihilism – be cast on the validity of all statements supplied by these official entities. And in the end it is the 'pervasive scepticism' engendered by UCTs that supplies solid ground for judging these theories unwarranted (123).

One of the virtues of Keeley's argument is its honesty. Starting from a position he characterizes as epistemological and setting aside interpretations he describes as 'sociological', Keeley reaches a conclusion that appeals to forms of social logic and to relations of authority, if not of power. We should reject conspiracy theories because we should trust the public entities that supply the official explanations. Such a conclusion pushes the cult of *trust* – a sentiment that played a major role in the formation of liberal political constructions (where it is conceived both as a movement of the soul and as a requirement for cooperation) – well beyond the nevertheless optimistic view of John Locke, who was not unaware that 'the twin of trust is betrayal' (Dunn 1988: 81).²⁹

Responding to Keeley ten years later, another philosopher, Juha Räikkä, focused on the voluntarist character of the argument (2009). Räikkä insists that there are good reasons to doubt official assertions. The authorities may be lying: Räikkä notes that Saddam Hussein's assertion that the September 2001 attack on the World Trade Center was the work of the Bush administration could be viewed as an official theory in Iraq, but as a conspiracy theory in the United States. And what can be said of Colin Powell's official explanation at the United Nations concerning the existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq? Citing Lee Basham (2001, 2003), Räikkä concludes that it would be unreasonable not to maintain a certain degree of scepticism since public institutions are not necessarily trustworthy when important interests are at stake, but that scepticism becomes problematic when it spreads and gives rise to belief in the existence of worldwide conspiracies. Here we come back to the criterion of size.

The issues raised by Keeley and Räikkä bring up the question of how far an inquiry should be extended and, by stressing the opposition between official authorities and individuals who lack any mandate, the question of who should do the inquiring. The fact that an inquiry is pursued beyond limits deemed reasonable by others is one of the features most often associated with the characterizations of paranoia or paranoid behaviour that have become common currency in the most ordinary situations of daily life, especially when such suspicions lead to extensive investigations. Probably with good reason, an attitude of suspicion is all the more likely to be viewed as a sign of psychological disturbance when the objects of the inquiry belong to the immediate environment and the persons implicated are close to the suspect individual, for example, friends, colleagues or family members (Boltanski 2012 [1990]). Where persons or things in close proximity are involved, one supposes that habit and common sense suffice to engender an acceptable degree of trust based primarily on sensory data, so that most people in most situations do not undertake inquiries. To the extent that an inquiry implies an interruption in the ordinary course of action, as do quests and questions that can be judged intrusive and aggressive, 30 living a life in which the slightest interaction would be subject to inquiry, in advance or after the fact, would entail excessive costs, endanger most social relations and gradually consume all the strength one needs in order to act. As evidence, we can turn to studies focused on the breakdown of relationships in political situations made highly stressful, for example, by the presence of an authoritarian power based on surveillance, in which people are constantly spying on one another. This was the situation in Stalinist

Russia, especially during the years preceding the Second World War, when those in power organized vast campaigns of denunciation.³¹ Similar effects occur in situations of civil war, where the presentation of self and the recognition of others – topics to which Erving Goffman devoted his earliest studies (1959, 1967) – are no longer simply aimed at protecting social honour or, in Goffman's terms, 'saving face', but involve matters of life and death.

Natalia Suarez offers a particularly striking example in her observations on daily life in Colombia in zones controlled either by the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) or by paramilitary forces (Suarez 2010). In such situations, uncertainty about the trust one can place in others, especially strangers, is of such magnitude, and associated with such vital dangers, that the slightest interaction is preceded by slow and laborious advances designed to provide a sense of the affiliations, loyalties and intentions of the person one is addressing – and also by considerably heightened self-awareness and self-control, so as to avoid giving others any social information that could be used against one. A way of being that would be considered 'paranoid' in a more peaceful context is in this case simply a manifestation of elementary caution. Survival skills are substituted for the ordinary skills of daily life.

Even in more ordinary situations of dispute (those I call affairs, 32 the means that allow the actors to make sense of stories that touch them closely may prove inadequate. Different versions of what is happening or what has happened contradict one another, so that it becomes difficult to reduce uncertainty as to the actions and intentions of others, even concerning incidents in which the persons in question were participants or evewitnesses (Dulong 1998). This uncertainty can only increase as the distance increases between the familiar environment and the contexts surrounding events that are known only through reports purporting to account for them.³³ In such cases, that is, in relation to most events qualified as 'historical', the elements of information that may be available to individuals all have an indirect character; they are provided through various media such as journalistic reports or in the form of data supplied by official sources, that is, agencies under the control of state or supra-state authorities. Individuals who are not directly involved in these events but who can consider themselves concerned by them, either owing to a belief that these events will have repercussions on their daily lives or through the intermediary of ideological linkages inducing comparisons with geographically distant situations, can only take positions on the events by forming a judgement on the truth-value

of what is presented to them as real. Now, such a judgement has no support beyond the credibility that is itself dependent on the degree to which these agencies have proven to be reliable or deceitful in past circumstances in relation to cases viewed as similar. Whereas, in situations of proximity, relations of causality – which, as Hume demonstrated,³⁴ can never be based on undeniable indices – rely on habit, or, in the case of scientific experiment, on reproducibility, in situations in which the object of belief is remote, relations of causality can be based on nothing but the logic of precedents. The latter is the logic used quite often by journalists, who, having to work under pressure, give meaning to an event and construct the stories in which they report it by associating it with other past events construed as similar. By placing events in a series, journalists implicitly select from among the multiplicity of events reported, whether they are dealing with testimonies, narratives, photographs or films. Even when reporters and their colleagues at the news desk who format a given article (for example, by adding headlines or by reframing and adding captions to photos) are acting 'in good faith', as one says, in the sense that they are not deliberately trying to hide certain events or to change the story, for example by skilful cutting of eyewitness accounts, the result is necessarily the expression of a 'point of view'.

The credibility of official agencies is also evaluated according to the logic of precedents, that is, by taking into account the degree of reliability manifested by the agency in similar situations in the past - not that so-called ordinary persons would have the means to judge their reliability on their own. Here, too, it is in a mediated fashion that ordinary persons form opinions about the credibility of a given agency by relying on the work of journalists when they return, after a lapse of time, to affairs that may appear dated (in what is called investigative journalism), but also, for example, when during court trials information is divulged that had previously remained 'in the shadows'. Popularized accounts of academic historical work can have the same effect when scholars who have gained access to previously closed archives deliver 'revelations' about events from a recent past. The years that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War thus witnessed a proliferation of media reports that disclosed truths about operations attributed to intelligence services of various state powers – the CIA and the KGB above all – and exposed 'state lies' to public view. Criticizing the 'snide tone of superiority' often adopted by 'persons who do not want to look naive', Carlo Ginzburg observes: 'We live in a world that has been dominated until recently by two superpowers led respectively by the ex-director of

the CIA and by the protégé of the late head of the KGB. Historians of the contemporary era would do well to ask themselves whether this coincidence does not reveal a new phenomenon: the specific, relatively autonomous role increasingly played by secret services on the international scene' (2007 [1991]: 67).

Let us note in passing that the trust placed by the 'public' in information supplied by official agencies constituted one of the principal objects of American social psychology in the 1940s and 1950s; studies on this point were prompted by these very agencies, which sought to find out what effects their campaigns had had during the Second World War and then during the Cold War. The difficulty lay in distinguishing between elements that depended on the authority of institutions in the formation of 'political attitudes' and 'beliefs' and those that depended on the authority of persons belonging to 'reference groups'. 35 When the credibility of official agencies was damaged by 'revelations' made after the fact by actors who acknowledged that they had played a role in manipulating information, trust was shifted to persons who, precisely because they lacked any mandate, were judged closer to ordinary people, more independent with respect to the interests at stake, and thus more reliable. We see this logic at work in a number of more recent affairs, often affairs with an 'ecological' dimension (involving nuclear energy, for instance) or a biopolitical dimension (as in the 'contaminated blood' affair [Hermitte 1998]). In these affairs, the work of unveiling, relayed by journalists, is attributed to 'whistle blowers', 36 individuals or associations whose credibility rests on claims of expertise independent of the official agencies that have sought to exclude them, reduce them to silence or persecute them.

The relation between the official versions and divergent versions of a certain number of affairs constitutes a central question for liberal democracies. These democracies are in fact based on two linked principles: first, self-government of the people by the people, carried out through the intermediary of institutions, and, second, freedom of speech in the public sphere, granted in principle to all citizens and on most topics.³⁷ The right to freedom of speech undergirds critique. Now, speech entails an invitation to believe. Freedom of speech thus goes hand-in-hand with freedom of belief. These two freedoms are based on the foundational liberal idea of common reason, which, deployed in a deliberative framework, must allow a choice between harmful and/or implausible opinion and useful and/or plausible explanations to be made almost mechanically. But what is to be done when people in increasingly large numbers believe in things deemed

senseless or pernicious by members of an elite that considers itself enlightened? In contemporary societies, one of the solutions offered for this problem has been an increasing recourse to the logic of expertise. Experts are accredited by an institution that grants them authority in certain areas. But then what is to be done when the experts themselves are found wanting, either through negligence or because they have knowingly closed their eyes to often crude falsifications and deceptions?³⁸

The acceptable and the unacceptable

Explanations designed to give meaning to an event are always embedded in a narrative, whether the event in question is 'personal' or 'historical'. We should note that these two sets of events, the personal and the historical, cannot be seen as completely unconnected. On the one hand, historical events have a personal character for actors who have been involved in them bodily, intellectually and emotionally, while they have an impersonal character for those who grasp them only at a distance. Thus, President Kennedy's assassination was a personal event for his wife and children but a historical event for the vast majority of Americans. On the other hand, an event that has only a local and personal character at first, in the sense that it affects only a few individuals who are directly involved in it, may expand to include a large number of other persons, even virtually the entire population of a country, thus taking on a historical character. This process can be seen at work in the case of affairs – the Drevfus affair being the paradigmatic example in France – during which the persons directly involved undertake to mobilize the greatest possible number of other actors in support of their cause.

The event-objects to which charges of conspiracy and countercharges of conspiracy theory refer thus take the form of stories. From the standpoint that interests us here, which is not ontological but sociological, these objects exist solely in relation to their transmission, and it is above all the way they are transmitted and received that demands our attention. Someone has told someone else the story of an event. The narrative contains 'facts', that is, information about bodies and their spatio-temporal situation (a given individual was present, or not, at a given place and time; a certain letter was sent, or not, to a certain place at a certain time; and so on), information based either on direct observation, collected testimony or inference. Such information confers a certain factual meaning on these events

(someone is dead; a building has collapsed . . .). But these 'facts' are not meaningful in themselves; as such, they cannot yet be grasped in a logic of causality. For this second movement to occur, an *explanation* of the event in question must be provided: the story must be reformatted in a way that permits a determination of its causes. Now, to give the cause of an event is to attribute its occurrence to certain entities that one has identified, and this presupposes making a selection among the available facts and/or challenging the factuality of some of the reported 'facts' and gathering others, then organizing them in an internally coherent form.

Viewed from this perspective, the main question raised by eventobjects concerns the conditions that must be met for the narratives in which they are reported to be judged acceptable or unacceptable. Some stories may be very broadly accepted by a large majority of the persons who take an interest in them. As far as I know, everyone agrees that General de Gaulle did in fact go to London in 1940 and did not, for example, hide out in the Soviet Union during the war (thus there is broad agreement that the photos showing de Gaulle with Churchill have not been doctored and do not show a stand-in disguised as the general). The situation is different with the conspiracy stories that interest us here. These stories are not accepted with unanimity. Several competing stories claim to be delivering the true version of what has happened. Some of them are accepted only by minorities, in contrast with the official stories to which a majority adheres. Others may have an official character but may still be considered invalid by majorities, which either subscribe to different narratives, declare their ignorance regarding the matter, or vacillate, according to the situation of utterance, among several possibilities.³⁹ In the case of the Kennedy assassination, for example, polls conducted in the United States have shown that about three-quarters of the respondents thought that the official version presented by the Warren Commission (the 'lone gunman' version) was false or dubious and that the murder should be attributed to a 'conspiracy' and linked with other political crimes committed during the 1960s (Knight 2007).

The fact that a certain story has been accepted or rejected is obviously not independent of the prior experience of the persons in question and the attachments that connect them to other persons or to specific situations in life. One can seek to establish a relationship between adherence to certain stories, along with doubt about or rejection of divergent stories, and the social position of a given person, for example the person's class, gender, nationality or ethnicity. One can also seek to juxtapose a person's acceptance or rejection of a

particular narrative with positions that that person has taken towards other events in the past, or with his or her broader orientations, religious, moral, political and the like. Thus, the fact of being on the left or on the right, inclined towards nationalism or inclined towards socialism, undeniably played a role in the propensity of the French to adhere to different stories, pro- or anti-Dreyfus, 40 during the Dreyfus affair, although this connection was not automatic, even in such an extreme case of polarization, at least as far as the actors most involved in the 'affair' were concerned. 41 Nevertheless, the differing modalities of interest that make a given person more inclined to accredit a given narrative depend on the nature of the event being recounted and explained. 42 Bringing all these modalities into play would thus oblige us to examine a virtually unlimited number of cases.

I have opted for a different approach, which entails trying to specify the formal properties a narrative has to manifest, in a given situation of utterance, in order to be judged acceptable or at least open to discussion, even by persons who do not accredit the way in which certain events are recounted in the story. This approach, borrowed from linguistics (which substitutes for the question of whether an utterance is true or false that of whether it is acceptable or unacceptable to a speaker of a given language), will orient us towards the analysis of the narrative grammars on which the character – acceptable or not – of the story of an event depends. We must note that, with respect to our object even more than in the kinds of cases that interest linguists, this approach raises the question of variation in judgements of acceptability as a function of the properties, sometimes dispositional and sometimes situational, of those who formulate them. ⁴³ But distributionalist investigations, rare in the field of linguistics, are no less rare for the kind of stories that interest us here. Carrying them out would entail thorny problems, especially because of the degree to which such narratives depend on the situation of utterance. Inquiries conducted through questionnaires and even through interviews tend, as we know, to reduce the multiplicity of contexts of utterance to a very limited and very stereotyped situation: the one that brings together, for a conversation of limited duration and in a neutral space, an inquirer (often an academic) and a so-called ordinary person who does not know what is expected of her and who wants to present herself in the best possible light in response to what she presumes to be the expectations of the person to whom she is speaking.⁴⁴ Just as a linguist hypothesizes a 'normal' speaker (who usually resembles the linguist to a T, it must be said), I shall thus opt, at this level of the analysis, to sketch the outlines of these grammars from the position

that would be occupied by a speaker capable of being heard in a university setting, which is moreover the case for most of the authors who have written about conspiracy theories, most often in order to denounce their absurdity and the dangers they present.

The grammar of normality

Let me spell out briefly the way I use the notion of grammar in this context (it can of course be used in a wide variety of ways). It designates implicit systems of constraints that must be respected in an utterance when the topic of the utterance is permeated by tensions or contradictions that have to be avoided or dissimulated – in so far as possible – in order to make the utterance acceptable. Nevertheless, to the extent that these constraints depend not only on the object in question but also on the context in which the object is approached, these grammatical modalities may vary according to the situation of utterance, especially depending on whether the situation can be characterized as public or private, official or playful, and so on.

Let us take an example directly connected with accusations of paranoia, drawing on a study I carried out that bore on the conditions of acceptability or unacceptability of public denunciations of injustice (Boltanski 2012 [1990]: 169–271). The corpus on which that study was based consisted of letters denouncing an injustice that were received during a specified time period (but had not been published) by the newspaper Le Monde; in many cases, the letter-writers referred to the existence of malevolent, hidden conspiracies. The journalists I questioned noted that some of the letters could be considered unproblematically as credible, while others 'unquestionably' came from 'paranoid' individuals. Between these two extremes, there was a broad range of messages that, according to the same journalists, would have to be subjected to a long and costly investigation to decide where they belonged on the axis between normality and mental illness. The analysis of this material consisted, on the one hand, in defining the variables (more than one hundred) that could be coded so as to obtain a statistical representation of both the substantive content (the nature of the complaint, characterizations of the actors and so on) and the formal characteristics (stylistic, rhetorical and graphic modalities) of each letter. And, on the other hand, it consisted in asking a panel of five judges, chosen for maximum diversity from among a large set of acquaintances, to read the entire set of texts and to rank each letterwriter on a scale from one (completely normal) to ten (completely

insane). These scores were then introduced into the statistical analysis describing the narrative structure of the texts in the form of factorial maps. The juxtaposition of the properties of the texts and the scores obtained made it possible to identify the signs on the basis of which the judges considered that they were dealing with a message sent by a normal person or by a person suffering from a mental illness.

A public denunciation of injustice has to overcome a specific tension that has to do with violence. Succinctly put, it is the following: the person who makes the declaration is denouncing an act of violence of which he claims to have been the victim and for which he is demanding reparations. But in so doing he is accusing a third party, which may be an individual or a collective, and this action, as is the case with any public accusation, is itself an act of violence. A reduction of tension presupposes the deployment of narrative means aiming to de-singularize the story of the alleged events. These means involve both the way the narrative is formulated and the conditions of its utterance. Let us consider a few examples. One of the most commonly used figures is that of a rise in generality. The author of the narrative starts from his own singular case and compares it to other cases that he deems similar so he can justify his act of public denunciation by arguing that he is not acting in his own personal interest but in favour of the common good, thereby attenuating the violence of his act. For the same reasons, a denunciation has greater persuasive power if it is made not by the victim directly but by an actant (the 'denouncer') who has not personally suffered from the alleged malevolent acts. This is particularly true if the denouncer is either someone who can claim a specific authority apt to be transformed into moral authority (for example, a celebrated professor at an elite university), or else a collective (for example, an association for the defence of human rights).

The messages deemed abnormal came from persons who had not succeeded in making use of such manoeuvres in a convincing way. Most often, these were persons who declared themselves victims without invoking anyone else who had taken up their cause, and their accusations were often directed towards people with whom they had close relationships. These persons did try to introduce figures of de-singularization into their complaints, showing that they were not unaware of the constraints weighing upon this type of utterance; however, they did so with such awkwardness and so little credibility that the measures were not merely unconvincing; they actually reinforced doubts about the veracity of the writer's claims and also, even more profoundly, about his or her mental health. The numerous

devices used included inappropriate use of legal terminology, reference to non-existent support groups (or 'committees' that included only the spouse and children of the plaintiff) and manoeuvres intended to elevate the writer's stature in the eyes of the reader, for example by adopting elegant-sounding but unconvincing titles, or by sprinkling the message with signatures accompanied by the standard legal formula 'read and approved'.

It is as though the authors of these letters did not succeed in grasping the requirements of what might be called a grammar of normality; their failure was manifested in particular by the intermediary of manoeuvres designed to conform to those requirements, but in contexts of utterance that made the attempts less than credible. In this grammar of normality, particular importance has to be granted to the question of size, that is, the question of the social value and importance of the various actants present in the narrative - who may represent only themselves, or who may on the contrary embody large-scale collective worth; in other words, a significant factor is the way the various effects of scale are taken into account (Revel 1998). Thus, for example, it is very hard to present oneself credibly as the victim of an elaborate conspiracy involving distant personalities whose malevolent dealings are worldwide in scope while at the same time designating as agents of the conspiracy individuals of low status, people in the victim's immediate environment such as long-term coworkers or members of his or her own family. Such accusations may be somewhat persuasive if the person making them is a high-ranking individual (for example, the prime minister of a country undergoing a civil war), but they are likely to be written off as delirious when they are made by some insignificant person who is hard to see, a priori, as a target of secret organizations. But it must be noted that these vast differences in scale do not suffice to discourage the authors of such charges; the writer may argue, for example, that she has been an involuntary witness to a fact of major importance (this device is often developed in the framework of spv novels).

The grammar of plausibility

Following the model of this grammar of normality, which we have just glimpsed in brief, it would probably be possible to sketch out what might be called a *grammar of plausibility*. The question of the plausible has been taken up by narratology, in particular with regard to novelistic fiction⁴⁵ and by epistemology for scientific or historical

knowledge; in the first case, the question of representation is emphasized, and in the second stress is placed on the conditions that inferences have to satisfy in order to be judged probable. In the case of fiction, plausibility is largely an effect of the coherence introduced into the narrative by the author. This 'internal' plausibility does not confer 'credibility' on the story as much as it assures the recognition of the fiction as such, constituted as an 'autonomous universe', a world unto itself (Kremer, n.d.). In the case of scientific and historical knowledge, plausibility is supposed to depend on the conditions (whether or not they have an experimental character), under which the observations and/or the disparate elements whose juxtaposition supports inferences (in the case of archaeology, for example) have been gathered.

Eager to establish a continuum between scientific knowledge and ordinary knowledge (unlike many epistemologists, who have a tendency rather to set them in opposition), John Dewey defined *inquiry* as a moment in ordinary experience when one comes up against a situation whose indeterminate character introduces doubt and anxiety. Getting out of such a situation presupposes the transformation of the anxiety into a problem, through observation and selection of the features that matter (Dewey 1966 [1938]). This transmutation makes it possible to act once again: to perform an action that transforms the initial situation and thereby constitutes the chief instrument, at once cognitive and practical, for solving the problem identified and for getting out of the anxious state that triggered the inquiry. At the same time, an inquiry has the effect of modifying both the object and the predicate simultaneously (ibid.: 125). The interest of this conceptual framework is that it intimately links the cognitive and practical components of the experience. This is why Dewey is especially interested in the type of anxiety that affects persons who are immersed in a course of action that they can no longer manage to pursue and in the type of problematization they construct in order to repair this interruption in the course of action. The stress on situated action allows Dewey to identify as 'pathological' those persons whose doubt is incessant and who are constantly setting up inquiries even though there is nothing inherently 'confused or obscure' about the situation itself; according to Dewey, this attests to a 'withdrawal from reality' (ibid.: 106). Nevertheless, this way of conceptualizing inquiry leads Dewey to emphasize personal knowledge (he maintains that judgement can be formed only within an individual person) in its most intimate aspects, as it relates to a given situation, the action that unfolds in it and the emotions that may accompany it (152). This is why he makes a sharp

distinction between direct knowledge ('acquaintance-knowledge') – for example, knowing a certain neighbour – and knowledge on a subject ('knowledge-about') – for example, Julius Caesar (a distinction he associates with the one between the French verbs *connaître* and *savoir* [151]). Dewey devotes much of his book to forms of indirect knowledge and to what makes utterances more or less plausible. But he then leaves the terrain of personal experience to develop an epistemology of historical knowledge.

The problems posed by plausibility, in the type of stories we find in works devoted to 'conspiracy theories', differ depending on whether the stories are envisaged from the standpoint of the person conveying them or that of the person receiving them. The authors of these theories often take on the identity of a scientist or an expert, even – or especially – when they lack authority certified by a mandate or, at least, by a university title. They seek to give their demonstrations all the outward appearances of a scientific undertaking, often outdoing 'real' scientists with a kind of maniacal positivism. Envisaged from a critical point of view, the stories they produce can thus be challenged by experts on the very terrain where they seek to situate themselves - that of proofs, inferences, the calculation of probabilities and so on. As has often been noted, these theorists frequently counter their critics with a system of defence that consists in spreading suspicion, most notably by challenging the clear-sightedness or the sincerity of their opponents.

But the question of plausibility takes on a different aspect if we envisage it from the point of view of the ordinary individual who receives these stories without being involved in any way in their construction or in the course of events to which they refer. Here it is not a matter of an 'expert' apt to return to the field to prolong the inquiry with the intention of identifying new 'clues' that will allow him to sustain a whole arsenal of arguments and counter-arguments. But it is not a matter, either, of an individual confronting the problematic situations of ordinary life - an 'ordinary person' immersed in 'ordinary experience'. 47 The Kennedy assassination, to return to an earlier example, may be important to a person or leave him indifferent, but in either case the story he hears about it and the explanations he receives for it are in no way rooted in direct experience. Although one cannot identify him with the reader of a novel, either (he knows that the story offered him is not presented as fictional but as 'real'), the person to whom narratives of this nature are transmitted can receive them by reactivating the type of attitudes acquired through familiarity with detective stories, whether encountered in novels, films or

television series. He will then be able to deal with them in the ludic mode, with the excitement that accompanies the solving of a mystery, probably all the more troubling in that the information is provided by an official agency. That is, with the conviction that the story he has heard is intended to 'mislead' – this is the 'reading contract' for detective stories – since the author, as an 'unsituatable agency of utterance' has taken pains not to tell the reader 'everything he knows', has provided 'selected information' and has manipulated the 'general presentation of the facts' in such a way as to give him false leads (Bayard 2000 [1998]: 80). There will then be a strong temptation to treat the narrative as just one construction among others, and to test its tenor by plunging it, for example, via the imagination, into a larger set of 'possible worlds'.⁴⁸

Still, we may suppose that the question of how the dividing line is drawn between the plausible and the implausible - rather like the question of how discernment works - has to obey preconditions that it ought to be possible to specify, even in cases like these. The preconditions are probably of two sorts. The first can be characterized as realities (Lemieux 2009). These consist in confronting the new information with information already taken to be acceptable. To designate operations of this type, we can borrow the term *cross-checking* from journalism (Lemieux 2000). Someone to whom the story of an event is told will relate it to other stories about similar facts and or about events known through personal experience. Experiences of lying, deceit and even circumstances involving the participation of several persons who can be presumed to have reasons to harm you are part of the personal experience of most people, and have marked their memories owing to their painful nature. These disparate stories and experiences constitute a sort of encyclopedia from which one can draw elements of more or less stabilized information whose framework composes the new story proposed. It is likely that a new story will be all the easier to accept when it includes a greater number of elements apt to be related to previously stocked elements. It is easier, and thus less costly, to believe that Kennedy was shot in the wake of a conspiracy fomented by the CIA and by the Mafia - two entities already present in many newspaper and/or fictional accounts - than by a plot drummed up by the *Illuminati*, characters who appear in certain stories with historical pretensions but who hardly pop up on every street corner. Stories that include beings whose bodily state is difficult to determine, either because they are presumed not to have bodies - such as supernatural beings - or because their bodies have never been exposed in public – such as extraterrestrials – thus require

a supplementary effort to secure adherence. The same thing could be said about cases in which cross-checking implies displacement across considerable temporal or spatial distances because the explanations provided refer to the intervention of entities that are either very far away or buried in a remote past, and this presupposes supplementary hypotheses about their survival over a long period of time and in secrecy. We must note, nevertheless, that the most ordinary crosschecking operations often rely on effects of scale that go from nearby to remote, from intimate to mediatized. What the old social psychology used to call the 'anchoring' of 'stereotypes' and 'prejudices' was based on operations like these. If I know through personal experience that my neighbour, a young man living in the suburbs, makes an intolerable - and thus mediatized - racket with his sound system, and if I know that some young people in the suburbs burn cars, my feeling of antipathy for my neighbour will be solidly rooted, and I will be able to generalize it to a fuzzy set of actors: 'young people in the suburbs'.

Nevertheless, the modalities of reception and transmission of stories of events that can be called *narratives* are not the only ones at work. They are in tension with other modalities that can be called 'fantasizing'. We can try to specify these contrasting modalities by taking up the opposition established by the Russian Formalists between works 'with subjects', organized in the form of *narratives*, and *fables*. In both cases, a certain degree of coherence is expected from the person who is transmitting or receiving the story, and this implies that a selection has been made from among the available elements. But while in the case of narratives the constraints of coherence bear in particular on chronology, spatial coordination, relations among actants and causality, these same elements are essentially of the symbolic order in the case of fables, where the principles of selection and organization have a character that can sometimes be qualified as aesthetic, sometimes as moral, both terms being taken in a broad sense. When the story transmitted tends towards the latter forms, it will be invested with figures whose chief property is that they are based on 'paradoxical' assertions, paradoxical in the sense that they contradict the data of experience and especially sensory data. As work at the frontiers of anthropology and cognitive science bearing particularly on tales and myths suggests (Boyer 2001), the paradoxical character of an assertion makes it easier to remember and to transmit, if only to the extent that the element that is thus highlighted stands out against the background of ordinary experience. In terms of information, we may say that the presence, in stories referring to actual current events, of

non-actual actions or beings endowed with uncertain bodily presence and unfathomable intentions plays the role of a signal that modifies the attitudes of the receivers and involves them in fantasizing and fabulation.⁴⁹ That is to say that it involves them, if we bracket its pathological manifestations, in an eminently social activity, in the sense that it is always best performed when there are several actors. It can be conceived as a game of questions and answers during which each player is incited to *embroider* the elements he or she has just been given by enriching them with new details – imaginary, of course, but consistent on the symbolic level with the aesthetic and/or moral orientation that the semantic material manipulated during the interaction tends to take on.

The way the two modalities that we have just considered are in balance probably depends in large part on the situation of utterance. Narratives transmitted by agencies that lack authorization, narratives relating and explaining events whose scenarios are unstable, are destined to be reported in turn to others by those who have received them. But this transmittal will take on different tonalities. referring rather to stories or to what we have called fables, depending on whether it is carried out in public or in private, before persons with authority or before close friends, in a framework perceived as 'serious' or playful, and so on. Or depending on whether the speaker assumes personal responsibility for the story being transmitted or is content rather to pass it along to others, sometimes enriching it with new details but without taking responsibility for its utterance. The logic of rumour, discourse lacking an originating subject for which no one assumes the truth functions but which one can nevertheless fully enjoy in the mode of play, is thus particularly conducive to the abandonment of narrative realism in favour of utterances in which the paradoxical components of the stories of events come to the fore.

The two forms whose outlines have just been sketched, the narrative form of fiction and the symbolic form of fables, thus seem to correspond to two modes of story circulation. When the circulation of a story takes a more narrative form, the process centres on the actors and their beliefs. The person who receives the story will try to cross-check what she has been told against data drawn from her personal experience and/or from other stories. Her point of view on the affair in question may turn out to be modified by this story, and it is the new point of view that she will seek to share with others by retelling the story in turn in her own way. When the circulation of the story takes a more fantastic or fabulating turn, the story itself becomes the centre of the process, and the persons who take hold

of it and disseminate it are only, in a way, its servants or helpers. It is no longer so much a question of whether the latter are personally convinced of what they are transmitting as it is a question of their contribution to *enriching* the story, which must be endowed with supplementary elements that are ever more paradoxical but also ever more coherent on the symbolic level each time the story passes from one person to another.

Alongside the grammar of normality and the grammar of plausibility, to account for the type of story that is told by works devoted to conspiracy theories, we need to analyse a third grammar, the one that organizes the description of social bonds and that governs, incidentally, the value judgements that may be made about these bonds. This will be focus of the following chapter, which is devoted to the way in which the causal explanation of events and of the entities to which these events must be attributed is presented in the case of sociology, a discipline whose object is precisely the description and analysis of the various modalities of the social bond.

Sociologists and their 'blunders'

Nathalie Heinich devotes a chapter to suspicion and conspiracy in a recent book, Le bêtisier du sociologue (The sociologist's blunder book), in which she pins down what she takes to be her colleagues' principal missteps (Heinich 2009). The author begins by recalling the remark of a colleague who reproached her, she says, for taking literally remarks gathered from persons during interviews without taking into account the fact that 'people sometimes lie, or lie to themselves'. Then, broadening her scope, she outlines the features of a type of sociologist who practises what she calls 'the sociology of suspicion' (31). Finally, she compares these 'sociologists of suspicion' to 'conspiracy theorists'. As she sees it, this type of sociologist simply 'transposes into her professional practice a fairly widespread tendency which another of her colleagues has observed for a long time under the heading of "conspiracy theories" (32). Heinich then presents a fairly standard chart of conspiracy theories (mistrust of elites and of the media, belief in manipulation, rejection of official information in favour of gossip gleaned on the internet and so on) with the customary references to the far right (the 'negationists'), to the far left (those who talk about 'class enemies') and finally – returning to the intuitions of doctors Sérieux and Capgras a century earlier – to paranoia. 'One does not need to spend a lot of time in intellectual milieus to notice that paranoia is the primary professional malady in that context. . . . The sociology of suspicion is a fairly widespread form of this malady, although it has not yet been well identified as such' (33). What 'the sociology of suspicion', 'conspiracy theories' and 'paranoia' have in common is the 'intentionalist hypothesis', that is, the:

systematic reduction of any action to a conscious (but preferably hidden, thus malevolent) intention. This turn of mind also tends to crush all causality under intentionality. . . . Where the paradigm of conspiracy is found: behind every effect there is a hidden strategy that is dissimulated so as to maximize a personal interest (or a class interest, for more sophisticated interpretations). (Heinich 2009: 35)

This passage is interesting because of the stress it places, in a brusque and polemical manner, on forms of rejection or critiques – formulated sometimes from outside the discipline and sometimes from within – that have never ceased to accompany sociology, more or less explicitly depending on the era and the author. So much so that, in a number of the debates or turning points that have marked the evolution of the discipline, it is not overreaching to see intellectual operations designed either to dispel or evade such accusations or, on the contrary, to advocate the positions subjected to critique while striving to give them a theoretical foundation. Examining these debates in their full extent and, often, their complexity would turn this chapter into a voluminous sociological treatise.

The way Heinich presents her argument brings together two relatively independent problems. The first, whose reach goes well beyond sociology, if only in that it has arisen most prominently in the development of psychoanalysis, concerns the access that human beings have to their own inner lives, and thus the degree to which they possess keys that allow them to understand and formulate more or less pertinent reasons for their own actions. Let us note that, in the realm of sociology properly speaking, the idea that the 'motives' actors give for their actions are not the true 'reasons' for these actions, and that the former are sometimes offered only to disguise the latter, has been defended most forcefully by Vilfredo Pareto (1963 [1916]). He presents it in a double conceptual opposition, on the one hand between logical and non-logical action (chapters 2-3) and on the other hand between residues and derivations (residues are recurrent reasons for acting, and derivations involve the explanations that actors supply when they are seeking to account for their own actions [chapters 6–9]).

I propose to set this question aside; while it certainly arises in socalled 'psychological' novels, it does not come up, or it comes up only marginally, in the thematics of detective fiction or espionage fiction. In detective stories or spy stories, the actors – especially those who are criminals or spies – either act strategically and know what they are doing, or else – when they are unaware of the real purposes of their actions – they deceive themselves because they have been deliberately

deceived or 'manipulated' by others. 'Suspicion' thus does not involve, in the cases that concern us here, the 'inner nothingness' from which modern humanity suffers, the 'less intimate [relation] with Ithel self' about which Maurice Blanchot speaks (quoted in Nathalie Sarraute's The Age of Suspicion, 1963 [1956]: 17). It does not even involve the deconstruction of the subject, long in the province of the novel but now taken over by philosophy and sociology, which no longer consider the 'self' as anything but a more or less successful chance assemblage of elements 'that derive from a common source' (ibid.: 40). Consequently, even biographical unity, of which prominent figures are especially likely to boast when they believe that they have made a 'success' of their lives and undertake, for example, to expose this 'unity' in memoirs, can be treated as an 'illusion', that is, as an a posteriori reconstruction. If suspicion is indeed at the heart of crime novels and spy novels, it participates, in this case, in another topos – the one that creates a crisis, as we have seen, in the transparent reality that the modern nation-state claims to guarantee, and it unveils the double of that reality, a hidden, criminal reality woven in secret by actors whose strategic intentions and dealings unfold at the very heart of the state.

The question of causality

The second problem Heinich pinpoints is specific to sociology, even though it is also of concern to history, especially to the extent that the latter has integrated schemas borrowed from sociology into its own configurations. It has to do with the question of what *entities* sociological analysis is to take into account in its descriptions, and the question of their size. Should sociology deal only with human persons, or should it also deal with larger entities often known as collectives? This question arises in a particularly acute form every time sociology seeks to propose an explanation to account for a certain state of society (a state identified through contrast with the state that prevails in other comparable societies) to account for a social change, or, in an even more pressing fashion, to account for an event - that is, for an assemblage of simultaneous phenomena whose singular conjunction is credited with the power to operate an abrupt change of state within a collective of any size. In such cases, sociology brings its own means to bear within the domain of history, even if the history in question is that of the present. Because sociology takes as its object the 'social world', or 'society', an object perceived by those who are

its actors and its witnesses (and sometimes its victims) in the form of a constellation of events, the discipline has been confronted from its very beginnings with the question of causality. Arising in a historical context marked by the advance of the experimental sciences, which rely on mechanisms capable of providing proof of causal relations aimed at conferring stable foundations on the physical world, sociology could not leave the question of causality aside without giving up its ambition to be recognized as a science. In the context of the 'moral sciences', which developed in the second half of the eighteenth century, efforts to govern large populations by rational means depended on the possibility of calculating relationships among the beings making up a whole that came to be called 'society' (Heilbron 2006: 122-5) – a term that was beginning to take on new meaning. But this calculation may bear either on simultaneous relations among individual subjects - as with Adam Smith, in his Theory of Moral Sentiments (2002 [1759]),² or with Jeremy Bentham (Laval 2007) - or on successive relations among political entities whose laws of evolution are being sought.³ From the outset, sociology has thus found itself pulled between two opposing tendencies, each associated with an older perspective; on the one hand, the philosophy of mind (and, later, psychology) and, on the other, history, towards which it has been increasingly drawn.

If sociology turns towards psychology, the entities it takes as its objects are for the most part individuals, to whom motives and intentions can be attributed, whose activities can be described and who can readily be placed in the position of subjects of action verbs. Nevertheless, even when it looks at individuals, sociology must take on entities of larger size and greater stability that are not persons properly speaking, since it distinguishes itself from psychology by the fact that it grasps these individuals not as isolated monads but in the course of their *interactions*. The discipline is concerned with *situations* in which individuals interact. Both sociology and social psychology thus have a tendency to envisage these situations in their own right, as it were, and, for instance, to propose a typology of situations that takes into account features considered to be more or less stable, without regard to the empirical context in which a certain state of the situation is observed. This option makes it possible to describe, and even to explain, states of things or changes of state: that is, events. But an event has relatively limited scope and consequences, or, rather, its scope and consequences depend on the position occupied within larger sets by the persons present in the situation observed, especially on the repercussions that the actions and decisions of those persons

have on other actors – in short, on the power of the persons present. The meticulous description of different empirical situations may bring out common features: for example, between an altercation in a café and a tussle among heads of state during a diplomatic encounter. But the consequences of these two types of dispute are not of the same order, especially if we take into account the other persons whose daily lives may be affected; these are probably relatively few in the first case, very numerous in the second. To account for these differences, it may not be enough to register actions and interactions in the situation observed. To understand the differences, it will be necessary to refer to other entities, more or less broad in scope, within which the actors in question occupy positions. Now, these entities are not persons, nor are they even situations.

Sociology can, on the contrary, turn towards the disciplines of history and geography, which do not hesitate to approach objects of great size, such as nation-states, empires, peoples, seas, continents and so on, often over long periods of time. But when it does so, the principal entities that it takes as its objects, to which its explanations will refer and among which it will establish relations of causality, are not persons. Describing the relations established among these entities is a difficult task, especially when the aim is to produce a description of the causal order, at least whenever ordinary language has to be used instead of mathematical representations. Unlike the situation in physics, where the objects under consideration can be treated as if they existed only in the language of mathematics, the objects of sociology (and also those of economics, moreover) rely on several descriptive languages. These languages are intelligible only on condition that the relation between objects described in mathematical terms, at the price of formalization (for example, the *variables* of a model), and objects described in ordinary language can be maintained. But as soon as sociology uses ordinary language – and it cannot avoid doing so – the question arises as to whether what it is describing belongs to the order of reality or to the order of metaphor. When sociologists are led to comment on the relation among variables, they have to introduce collective entities – nation-states, groups, 'socio-professional categories', branches of industry and so on - to which it is hard to refer without putting them in the position of subjects of action verbs and at least implicitly attributing to them something like a will, or even intentions.

One of the solutions adopted has consisted in considerably limiting the field of the objects considered so as to distinguish maximally between the treatment to which these objects are subjected and the way human beings and their modalities of action are discussed. By

remaining within the limits of the models whose axiomatics has been posited, sociology – especially when it relies essentially on statistical data – can present correlations among variables and can, for example, explain modifications that affect one particular variable under the action of one or more other variables. But this option implies excluding events, which are absolute singularities, from the scope of the discipline, leaving the study of small-scale events to psychologists and large-scale events to historians - history being considered from this standpoint as a 'soft' science. However, this approach is hard to maintain with consistency – in particular owing to the simple fact that, except for sociologists (or some sociologists), only what is happening is of interest to the actors because it is from the analysis of what is happening that they hope to draw resources to orient their actions, especially in periods of uncertainty or change. Now, to describe and explain what is happening on a more or less broad scale (for example, an economic crisis, a rebellion, a particularly 'odious' criminal act, the failure of a business, the growing presence of homeless people in urban centres and so on), sociologists are led to carry out three problematic operations. For one thing, they must qualify what is happening, that is, identify events by relating them to other events viewed as being of the same type and bring them together into classes of events. They must also identify entities that are not persons and associate them in classes of entities (such as social classes, age groups, genders, ethnicities and so on). Finally, they have to establish a relation between the events and the entities in such a way that the occurrence of a particular event can be attributed to the action of a given entity.

We must note that these operations are not fundamentally different from those that 'ordinary persons' – here meaning all persons who are not sociologists – carry out in the course of their daily lives, at least every time they face uncertainty and seek an orientation to guide their actions. These inquiries – in the sense that pragmatist tendencies have given the term – may concern the immediate environment or be extended to larger sets, relying on information supplied by the media, or even on work done by sociologists or on information supplied by journalists who themselves often draw on sociological texts. Most often, moreover (as we saw in the preceding chapter), these inquiries consist in constant back-and-forth movement (not always very well controlled) between what can be known through experience and what can only be known in a mediated fashion. Now, the entities that appear in sociological discourse and those to which the actors refer are expressed, at least in part, by the same terms, even if their contours

are generally more precise in sociological usage than in that of ordinary persons. There are at least two reasons for this, which I have just evoked. The first is that sociology cannot forge a language that would be exclusively its own, at least not without becoming completely unintelligible. It has to describe behaviours that have 'meaning', that is, that can be translated into the language of the actors. The second is that sociological discourse is not confined to university arenas; it rebounds into the everyday world, especially through the intermediary of political decisions that draw their authority from the opinions of 'experts'; this is increasingly true in contemporary societies, which have been characterized for this reason as 'reflexive' (Giddens 1984).

Nevertheless, the inevitable proximity between ordinary intrigues and sociological explanations and between events and the entities that are the focal points in each case is often envisaged by sociologists as if it were a matter of shameful promiscuity. It arouses an anxiety in which the question of conspiracy and charges of 'conspiracy theory' have played an important role. Indeed, if the most notorious sign by which persons accused of paranoia are recognized is the fact that they attribute historical or personal events to the action of large-scale entities, on which they confer a sort of intentionality and capacity for action, how could we manage to keep similar accusations from being addressed to sociologists? Don't the latter also establish narrative arrangements that feature, for example, social classes, economic interest groups, lobbies, systems, structures, milieus, organizations (Offerlé 1998) and so on, to which they sometimes attribute intentions, strategic capacities or reactions and which they cannot prevent themselves from placing, in their descriptions, in the position of subjects of action verbs? When a sociologist speaks of 'the ruling class(es)', the 'proletariat', 'women', 'inner-city youth', the 'militaryindustrial complex', 'capitalism', 'small-business owners', 'populist movements', 'labour unions' and so on, does he not risk being accused of providing a supposedly 'scientific' footing for conspiracy theories?

Legal, sociological and narrative entities

Here we have to consider an additional question, one that concerns the relation between sociology and law. In effect, the law, too, constantly shapes collective entities, establishing their limits and specifying their official designations; all these practices are formalized in the theory of 'moral persons'. Laws also establish regulatory arrangements that spell out the attributions of these entities and circumscribe their

domains (as in references to the 'specialty of the moral person'), that is, regulations specifying the scope of the moral person's activities, which is necessarily limited by the goal pursued. As a consequence, laws specify the set of events that can be expected from these entities and for which they may be held responsible, so that the entities in question may either be given credit for meeting their responsibilities or be penalized if they fail to do so. Thus, for example, the law governing associations requires that the goals of the association for which recognition is sought be spelled out; the idea of an association formed without a specified goal (an association whose only function would be phatic, to borrow a term from linguistics) makes no legal sense. The goals registered must not be illegal, subversive, criminal or in contradiction with other stipulations of the law. This specification of the field of recognized attributions implicitly places all other events outside the field; consequently, an entity that goes beyond its legal competency to act by undertaking actions in a domain other than its own can be penalized. Thus, we expect an oil company to dig wells, not to intervene in the politics of a country where it has been granted a concession.

We must also note that, once such entities have been legally established, they take on a more or less autonomous existence with respect to the set of individuals who occupy positions within them; the number of these individuals is relatively unimportant. It follows that the question of whether a recognized entity that no longer has any members – that is, in a sense, an empty set – continues to 'exist' or not can be raised, at least as an 'extreme case' or a 'hypothetical example'. As evidence, we can look at the work Yan Thomas devoted to the constitution of the notion of 'moral person' in Roman and medieval law as a being endowed with an existence independent of that of physical persons (Thomas 1995, 1998); one problem addressed in medieval law, for example, involved the question of whether a monastic establishment was or was not an existing object after all of its occupants were gone. In contrast, the fact of membership in the entities must be clearly distinguished from non-membership, leaving no room for doubt. Legally, an individual does not belong more or less to an entity (although in practice various individuals may participate more or less in the activities of an organization). An individual's attachment to an entity has to be the object of an explicit procedure (for example, candidacy) and the same holds true for a member's departure (for example, removal or resignation), which does not prevent membership status from being labelled according to different modalities (full, honorary, auxiliary, replacement, and so on).

Legally defined entities thus have clear contours, although the individuals they include always belong to a plurality of sets whose number is theoretically unlimited but whose membership relations can be governed by explicit rules of incompatibility, by prohibitions on 'double dipping' (holding multiple positions or receiving duplicate compensation) or by procedures designed to define 'conflicts of interest'. Nevertheless, a legal fiction allows such conflicts to be considered not only in different lights but almost as if different persons were concerned. This is particularly clear in the case of administrative law, when the responsibility of an agent is at issue and a question arises as to whether the acts attributed to that agent were carried out 'on the job' or 'off the job', that is, by the agent acting in an official capacity or as a private individual (Grawitz 1966). Let us add, finally, that legal entities always include representatives, responsible parties or spokespersons, who are physical persons, ordinary individuals endowed with their own bodies, who can represent these entities, speak in their names and in certain cases be held legally responsible for the dealings imputed to them. Their role has an official character in the sense that, once it has been recognized, it cannot be called into question except by a speech act that has a legal character itself.

Law thus plays an essential role in the processes that stabilize reality. It helps make reality at once intelligible and predictable by pre-forming causal chains that can be activated to interpret events that occur. Obliged to link events to entities, the legal system has to have at its disposal an encyclopedia of entities that it recognizes as valid. It is the law's responsibility – as I suggested at the outset – to express the whatness of what is and to associate these judgements about being with judgements of value. This is why laws can only be produced by institutions – which today most often depend on nationstates – and, conversely, why every arrangement capable of producing laws can be counted as an institution (Boltanski 2011 [2009]). In this sense, one can say that law is at once a semantic agency, in that it specifies qualifications (Cayla 1993), and an ontological operator par excellence. According to Alain Badiou (2005 [1988]: 23–30), in a certain state of society, law in effect takes on the operation of count-as-one (29) and thereby interrupts the interminable dialectic of the one and the many in a way that would be decisive if it were not constantly confronted by critiques.

One of the peculiarities of legally defined entities is that placing them in the position of subjects of action verbs, and even attributing intentions to them, is generally considered more or less unproblematic, probably precisely because these entities are represented by

embodied individuals, allowing for a sort of tacit shifting back and forth between 'moral persons' and 'physical persons'. It is certainly by referring to such collective entities that one most easily escapes the accusation of opening the way to conspiracy theories. Let us look at a major daily French newspaper, Le Monde, which as of this writing is taking care to maintain its respectability. For the most part, its headlines include either the names and affiliations of physical persons, especially if these persons are of great stature (for example, important politicians), or names or acronyms designating legally constituted entities, primarily names of countries, cities, regions, political parties or businesses. We also find terms that designate sets of individuals inasmuch as they have been the object of a legal specification ('the unemployed'). But it is much less common to find terms designating 'uncertain persons', as French law puts it, that do not constitute clearly defined sets (for example, 'the traditional right'). It is also unusual to find entities that may figure in statistical nomenclatures but that have more or less fuzzy borders and that have no representatives, such as 'the workers' or 'the poor'. Finally, one seldom sees terms that refer to such sets by a critical label or by a negative property ('reactionaries', 'morons'), an ethnic origin ('Jews', 'Arabs', 'ghetto blacks'), or a handicapping condition ('mentally retarded'). However, it is hardly necessary to point out that references to such entities are very frequent in ordinary discourse, especially in situations of utterance that have a private character - which is why I call them narrative entities.

The simplest and least contestable way for sociologists to take entities with a collective character as objects is to borrow them, as journalists do, from the stock of recognized entities that have already achieved legal qualification. This is, moreover, how sociologists often operate, especially when they rely on computing centres or data banks at the state or supra-state level from which they can draw data that is already organized according to nomenclatures based on legal or paralegal grounds. This approach nevertheless has the disadvantage of not supporting the construction of tables that are markedly different from those produced in large numbers by official agencies and the segments of the media recognized as serious; in other words, it does not produce representations of reality whose originality can be attributed to the specific advantage offered by the use of a scientific method. By constructing schemas in which only already recognized entities appear, sociology risks merging with the fields of law or business administration and generating doubts about the added value of its contributions.

Furthermore, sociologists may deem that certain entities established by law are obsolete because they have not been modified to take social changes into account. Or, adopting a critical posture, they may judge that the official character of certain entities conceals reality while appearing to describe it, and that some existing entities cannot be identified and studied on the basis of official entities since their contours do not coincide. Sociologists must thus forge their own entities and establish their validity with the means of inquiry at their disposal, such as interviews and – above all – statistical analysis. They must also give these entities specific names (for example, 'secondgeneration immigrant youth', 'the inheritors', 'the new lower middle class') while avoiding confusion with the vague and often pejorative terms that designate the entities I have called narrative. When the operation succeeds, the entities constructed by a sociologist may be taken up by the media and even integrated into the nomenclatures of official agencies. This process tends to confer a real and undeniable existence on the entities in question, in a way, since the actors themselves eventually use the terms and recognize themselves in the sociological descriptions (I was able to see this happen when I analysed the formation and 'officialization' of the category of *cadres*, a process to which sociology made a contribution [Boltanski 1987] (1982)]). Nevertheless, a sociologist's construction of the object on which his analyses bear, especially if it has a critical thrust, may be accused of engendering an artefact by conferring substance on a non-existent group, crediting it with actions and attributing intentions to it, even if these are called 'objective' to distinguish them from the intentional orientations of individuals. The sociologist will be reproached for taking an imaginary entity - such as 'the ruling class' – as his target, and for doing so out of a personal passion associated with political causes; he may even be accused of producing an equivalent – all the more pernicious for claiming to be scientific – of the conspiracy theories that nourish the resentment of 'losers', the envious and the insane. These accusations - which we examined in the previous chapter in the realm of politics – have such a consistent character that it is worth taking the time to see how they have penetrated the domain of sociology.

The 'superstitions' of the social sciences

In a famous lecture given at the plenary session of the 10th International Congress of Philosophy in Amsterdam in 1948, Karl

Popper established a link between two questions from different horizons (Popper 2002a [1948]): the question of what entities were pertinent to sociological analysis, and the question of what role was played by conspiracies in political and social history. This operation, a veritable intellectual tour de force, has played a major role in the history of the social sciences. For one thing, it has supplied a foundation and epistemological legitimacy for the rejections and challenges that Marxism and Durkheimianism have faced (emanating in particular from philosophers inspired by the work of Vilfredo Pareto or Carl Schmitt, such as Jules Monnerot and Julien Freund in France, whose trajectory from liberalism to the far right intersected with that of Raymond Aron at one point⁵). For another, it has inaugurated a new way of practising the social sciences, inspired by neoclassical economics, of which Raymond Bourdon is one of the most influential representatives. Finally, it is to this lecture by Popper that we owe the introduction into the social sciences of a formula aimed at pinpointing and disqualifying 'sociological conspiracy theories'.

In the lecture (Popper 2002a [1948]: 336), Popper aspires to map out a truly scientific programme for the social sciences, one capable of finally putting these sciences at the service of a rational politics. This effort to provide the field with new foundations starts, appropriately enough, with a critique of the state of the social sciences as they stood, according to Popper, in the mid-twentieth century. In his critique, Popper repeats in an even more polemical fashion the objections he developed in articles published in the journal Economica in the mid-1940s, translated and published in book form as The Poverty of Historicism (2002b [1957]). In this earlier work, he begins by describing the features that he sees as characterizing historicism (as opposed to 'methodological naturalism'). Among these features, we shall retain first of all the theses he characterizes as 'holist', as opposed to 'atomist' (an opposition that broadly encompasses the classic distinction between *holism* and *individualism*). The advocates of historicism consider that 'the objects of sociology, social groups, must never be regarded as mere aggregates of persons. The social group is *more* than the mere sum total of its members, and it is also *more* than the mere sum total of the merely personal relationships existing at any moment between any of its members' (2002b [1957]: 15). Popper represents 'holism' as a form of organicism (17). A second feature relevant to our project is 'methodological essentialism' – as opposed to the 'methodological nominalism' that has been introduced 'so successfully in the natural sciences' (26). This consists in believing that 'the task of social science is to understand and to explain such sociological

entities as the state, economic action, the social group, etc., and that this can be done only by penetrating into their essences', which 'presupposes universal terms' that can 'distinguish the essential from the accidental' (26-7). A third characteristic of historicism is the belief that social science can establish 'laws' and general tendencies and even reveal 'the law of evolution' of society (97). These errors stem from the fact that '[t]he social sciences have developed very largely through the criticism of proposals for social improvements or, more precisely, through attempts to find out whether or not some particular political or economic action is likely to produce an expected, or desired, result' (53). To this 'holistic or Utopian engineering', which 'aims at remodelling the "whole of society" in accordance with a definite plan or blueprint' (61), Popper opposes the 'piecemeal social engineering' (58) that corresponds to the 'characteristic approach of the ... engineer' and consists in 'tinkering' so as to bring about 'small adjustments and readjustments which can continually be improved upon'. For the 'piecemeal engineer knows . . . that we can learn only from our mistakes. Accordingly, he will make his way, step by step, carefully comparing the results expected with the results achieved, and always on the look-out for the unavoidable unwanted consequences of any reform' (61). (This phenomenon later came to be called 'perverse effects'.)6

In Popper's 1948 lecture, this feature, couched in much more acerbic terms, brings together the epistemological critique presented in *The Poverty of Historicism* and the theoretical and political polemics the author had developed in The Open Society and Its Enemies (1963 [1945]), directed especially against the historicism of Hegel and Marx. These two books had been conceived and drafted concurrently, moreover, during the period of exile Popper spent in New Zealand (1937–1946), with the intention of showing 'how "historicism" inspired both Marxism and Fascism' (Popper 2002c [1976]: 130). In 'Prediction and Prophecy in the Social Sciences', he accuses these sciences of being corrupted by a doctrine in which he sees 'the relic of an ancient superstition' that leads to risky and harmful 'prophecies' (2002a [1948]: 452). Primary responsibility for this deviation is attributed at the outset to Marxism, which is imbued with a philosophy of history inspired by Hegel. This historicist doctrine of the social sciences has as its counterpart a politics that Popper characterizes as a historicist doctrine of politics, that is, a doctrine according to which 'the task of politics is to lessen the birthpangs of impending political developments' (455). The historicist error is not limited to Marxism, however, since Popper identifies it in other tendencies in

the social sciences, and especially in John Stuart Mill, 'who inherited [it] from [Auguste Comte]' (ibid.). Nevertheless, the historicist doctrine, inasmuch as it inspires belief in a necessary historical evolution, is far from being the sole enemy of rational social science. The main defect of the social sciences is that they take as their object of study the 'behaviour of social wholes, such as groups, nations, classes, societies, cultures, civilizations, etc.' (459). This 'naive collectivism . . . has to be replaced by the demand that social phenomena, including collectives, should be analysed in terms of individuals and their actions and relations' (ibid.).

At this stage of his demonstration, Popper still deems it necessary to warn the reader against another deviation that originates for its part in the tendency to see voluntary, coordinated action on the part of 'some powerful individuals or groups' as the principle of causality of social phenomena, 'including things which people as a rule dislike, such as war, unemployment, poverty, shortages' ([2002a [1948]: 459). He calls this second deviation the conspiracy theory of society (ibid.). He exonerates Marx from responsibility for originating the theory, but he identifies it in 'Vulgar Marxism' (461). Still, it is clear that he is also targeting fascism and Nazism since he considers that by giving in to conspiracy theory 'Vulgar Marxism' has regressed 'from Marx to Goebbels' (ibid.). The comparison suggests an analogy between Marxism and Nazism that has been exploited - as we have already seen - by theories of 'totalitarianism'. Here again, it is a matter of a 'superstition', older even than historicism, which consists in attributing the causes of social phenomena not to the machinations of 'the gods on Homer's Olympus' but to 'the Learned Elders of Zion, or the monopolists, or the capitalists, or the imperialists' (459).

In this way, two dangerous illusions turn out to be eliminated: on the one hand, the naive sociological belief in the existence of 'wholes' treated as subjects of social action – something that only individuals can be; on the other hand, the no less illusory belief that, by acting in concert and organizing themselves voluntarily, individuals could have an impact on social phenomena. Popper can then define 'the task of the theoretical sciences' as 'to trace the unintended social repercussions of intentional human actions' (460). He posits individuals, each of whom has a will and develops intentional actions in relation to individual motives and interests. But these individuals, all of whom know the motives behind their own actions, do not have resources that would allow them to bring their desires or intentions into convergence so as to unite them in common actions. Leaving it at this clearly does not offer many possibilities for understanding,

explaining and perhaps anticipating or orienting social change, whose stochastic character leaves no room for action or even for interpretation. Thus, it is necessary to supplement this theoretical framework with an arrangement for coordination that corresponds neither to planning nor to concertation, and which, even while remaining close to the actors, with their desires and their interests, still has the supra-individual character of a universal form that goes beyond the particularities of persons, that is, in the terms used in On *Iustification*, a 'higher common principle' (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]: 27–8). This arrangement, which in the realm of economics relies on a qualification of persons by their desires and interests and on a reduction of goods to their price, is nothing other than the market (or strategic anticipations, in game theory). But the mechanism of the market is extended in such a way as to allow social phenomena to be explained as a whole (something that will be illustrated most systematically in Gary Becker's work⁷), which amounts to bringing the various modalities of action down to the same level while ignoring the diversity of the political metaphysics on which the agreement is based (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]).

However, in his 1948 Amsterdam lecture, Popper did not settle for generalizing a mode of coordination borrowed from microeconomics with the intention of renewing the question of social and historical causality; he attributed events neither to individuals invested with power nor to collective entities but to the fortuitous encounter of a multiplicity of individual actions in a hypothetical space constructed on the model of the market. For him, this construction had significant political and moral value; it was the only solution that made it possible to avoid repeating the abominations that had ultimately resulted from the invention and spread of the 'totalist' conceptions of history that, associated with 'sociological conspiracy theories', engendered the Nazi terror. We may presume, however, that the Nazi danger was not Popper's immediate preoccupation. During the period when he gave his lecture, the enemy was embodied rather in what he called 'Vulgar Marxism', and the danger he sought to warn against originated in the attribution of unwelcome events ('war, unemployment, poverty, shortages') to the entities – uncertain, to say the least – known as monopolies, capitalism or imperialism (Popper 2002a [1948]: 459). But, once clothed in epistemological dignity, the argument tends to escape from its political determinations and ends up discrediting all sociological discourse which entails reference to collective entities, whatever they may be ('groups, nations, classes, societies, cultures, civilisations, etc.' [ibid.]) – that is, most of the analyses that purport to emanate from the discipline.

The heart of the argument consists in establishing a necessary link between reference to collective entities and reference to a conspiracy; Popper treats these two activities as though they are equivalent operations. The question of intentionality is central here. Conspiracies - whose existence Popper does not deny, as we have seen - bring together a generally limited number of individual actors who undertake to coordinate their actions with the intention to seize power. This intention may be called *common* because the actors declare it to one another. A conspiracy thus indeed constitutes, in this sense, a collective form, the possibility of which Popper acknowledges. It must thus undoubtedly be placed in the position of subject of action verbs. But Popper argues, as if it were self-evident, that this type of collective intentionality cannot be attributed to sets including a large number of elements. How could anyone imagine, for example, that all the members of a given social class – let us say, to remain as close as possible to Popper's concerns, 'the ruling class' – could coordinate all their actions through the intermediary of an explicit ongoing conspiracy?

It is nonetheless remarkable that Popper does not invoke the distinction between legally constituted entities and the ones I call narrative entities. While his critique applies easily to the latter, the same cannot be said of the former. Indeed, the very orientation of the law, while it may indeed support the operation of *counting-as-one*, must allow, through deliberation, for the coordination and implementation of a common decision, which a spokesperson makes public. Now, if the deliberation has taken place according to adequate procedures, this decision must be considered as the most rational possible - in keeping with the model of communicative action theorized by Jürgen Habermas. Moreover, a mechanics of this type is the basis not only for the formation of great political assemblages, most notably democracies, whose defence Popper seeks to ensure, but also for business firms whose organization, even if it remains hierarchical, leaves room for mechanisms of collective governance by way of stockholders' councils, expert commissions, and so on. And I have not even mentioned entities (for example, the OECD or the World Bank) that, at the national or supra-national level, have the task of encouraging coordination within vast conglomerates, economic ones in particular, treated as if they were totalities. One particular discipline, that of management, which was already very active during the time Popper was writing and has continued to develop ever since, is entirely devoted to rationalizing these functions of coordination, relying on support from the social sciences, particularly economics but also sociology and the cognitive sciences.

How to escape from Popper's curse?

The offensive whose general outline we have just seen, and of which Karl Popper was one of the masterminds, did not fail to affect the evolution of the discipline of sociology as a whole, especially with respect to determining what entities it is appropriate for sociology to evoke. Nonetheless, its effects were not immediate, and efforts to generalize the paradigm, sometimes taking the form of a crusade, ran up against resistance on the part of tendencies and schools of thought that, having taken collective entities as their objects and used them to forge explanations, saw no reason to toss them out. This resistance was particularly strong in France with regard to the references to social classes that had been incorporated into the arrangements of the welfare state (planning commissions, socio-professional categories, national accounting and so on); these entities benefited from a quasiobiectal existence and were recognized even by so-called ordinary persons.⁸ Thus it was especially when this system of arrangements began to be questioned and then dismantled - roughly between the second half of the 1970s and the 1990s - that the impact of the Popperian arguments was felt. Nevertheless, it seems to me that a certain number of innovations and theoretical turning points that have marked sociology over the last fifty years or so can be interpreted as attempts to escape what could be called *Popper's curse*. Without going into detail (which would require a full-scale treatise), I shall mention a few of these attempts here.

Methodological individualism

The simplest way to escape from Popper's curse is to acknowledge that it has sturdy foundations and to seek to amend the social sciences. The tendencies that sought to develop a sociology directly inspired by microeconomics, based on statistical tools and/or on mathematical modeling, are the ones most closely connected with Popper's propositions. They took on major importance in the United States starting in the 1960s and 1970s ('rational actor' theories) and found an impeccable illustration in France in the 'methodological individualism' developed by Raymond Bourdon and his disciples. In this framework, the individual is the logical atom of analysis. Individuals are determined by reasons to act in relation to rationalities that depend on the information available to them (limited rationality) on the one hand; on the other hand, individuals are not governed by economic motivations alone, but also have an axiological or cognitive orientation.

Social phenomena result from combinations among these individual choices, so they cannot be explained by membership in collectives.

This elegant solution nonetheless includes significant residues. In particular, it leaves outside the field of interpretation the fact that evoking communities or collectives designated by name is hardly the sole prerogative of sociologists. In a way, when sociologists refer to this practice in their attempts to theorize society, they are only taking up a type of construction that is constantly deployed by the actors themselves in the course of their social activities. It would probably be hard to find examples of societies in which this way of constructing the self-reflexiveness of social action is absent. A sociology that adopts the goal of modellizing the way in which social actors engender 'collective processes', that is, the way they fabricate society, can perfectly well consider that communities, or, more generally, collectives, are fictions: this is undeniable from a certain perspective. But on one condition: sociology has to recognize that these fictions seem to be in some sense necessary, and that they must be granted a place in sociological theory, if on that basis alone. To put it succinctly, methodological individualism has a hard time developing a theory of institutions, even though institutions constitute arrangements that social life cannot do without, or so it seems (Boltanski 2011 [2009]: 50–82). A risk that methodological individualism has to confront, on the same basis as the theory of rational choice, is the risk it encounters in producing descriptions and explanations, which it often bases on mathematical models that retain nothing of the actors' experience. If constructing systems of causality that break with commonly accepted explanations is one of the privileges of science, and even one of its requirements, we must nevertheless observe that, in the case of the social sciences, the latter is accompanied by an additional condition that consists in re-incorporating the actors' experience into the model, along with the language in which they describe and interpret that experience.

Analytic Marxism

Similar remarks can be made about two other tendencies, whose invention (in the first case) or radicalization (in the second) can be interpreted as attempts to save the theoretical groupings that are most directly targeted by the Popperian attacks, namely, analytic Marxism and structuralism respectively. Analytic Marxism, developed chiefly in the Anglo-Saxon countries during the 1980s (Gerald Cohen, John Roemer, Jon Elster, Philippe van Parijs), is an attempt

to renew Marxism by reinterpreting it with the help of precisely those tools that had been used to destroy it, in particular logical positivism and rational choice theory. In the respect that interests us here (the selection of pertinent entities), analytic Marxism seeks to get beyond 'Hegelian holism'; it sides with atomism and even reductionism. It attempts in this way to get rid of 'superfluous entities' and to base its analyses on 'simple logical forms', as logical positivism advocates. Thus, in the realm of economics, John Roemer borrows tools and forms of model-making from microeconomics to construct the theory of work value, intending to forge a rational theory of exploitation that takes into account only compromises among individual strategies. For Jon Elster, a philosopher and a sociologist, Marxism has to be reconstructed on the basis of the actors' choices, actions, and strategies, in the framework of a rational choice theory that draws on game theory to analyse the processes of social interaction (1985: 10-15). In the opening pages of his voluminous book on Marx, he lays claim to 'methodological individualism', considered as a 'form of reductionism': 'To go from social institutions and aggregated patterns of behaviour to individuals is the same kind of operation as going from cells to molecules' (ibid.: 5). He is opposed to the 'methodological collectivism' that 'assumes that there are supra-individual entities that are prior to individuals in the explanatory order' (6). Thus, for example, since work is 'heterogeneous', contributions cannot be measured 'on a common scale' (516), which invalidates the theory of exploitation and, as a result, that of social classes. As one thing leads to another, the very idea of capitalism is challenged since "[clapital" at times appears, mysteriously', in Marx, 'as an agent with a will of its own' (514). It follows that the ideas of exploitation and social classes must give way, in this re-invented Marxism, to a 'theory of distributive justice' (516). The truth of Marx is Rawls. Thus, as is often the case when one tries to use the enemy's weapons to defend oneself, the analytic renewal of Marxism ends up gradually turning into a trial of Marxism.

The radicalization of structuralism

The way structuralism reacted to Popper's curse took a different, indeed an opposing, direction since it consisted not in amending its positions but, on the contrary, in pushing them to their most extreme expressions. The structuralist orientation appears to be at the opposite pole from methodological individualism, and it is obviously one of the targets at which Popper's critique is aimed. In fact, works that

refer to structures are particularly vulnerable to Popperian charges when they maintain, in their descriptions, the presence of individuals who, as it were, inhabit or fill the very structures whose existence is a consequence of their actions. In this case, they confront a challenge that consists in spelling out the relation between structures presented as if they existed independently of the individuals and the individual behaviours of the agents that are associated with the action of these structures. The most economical way to avoid this problem is to minimize the role of the actors (reduced to simple 'bearers' of structures, in Louis Althusser's terms), or even to make them virtually disappear from the description (as in certain of Nicos Poulantzas's texts [Poulantzas 1968]). One can then unfold a chart of the social world entirely composed of structures, but once again at the price of a break with ordinary experience, a break that is often justified, in response to critiques, by invoking the unconscious character of social determinations. (But is the reference to the 'unconscious' not in this case, as Michel Henry has argued [1985], another avatar for the metaphysics of consciousness?)

The theory of habitus

This is to a large extent the problem that Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus attempts to solve (1984 [1979]). It draws in particular on American cultural anthropology, constructed at the intersection between ethnology and psychoanalysis (Margaret Mead, Gregory Bateson, Abram Kardiner, Ralph Linton and, perhaps most importantly, Erik Erikson). It transposes to the analysis of social classes in contemporary societies the theoretical schemas that had been set up in this branch of the field to allow back-and-forth movement between the descriptions of a culture as a totality installed in institutions and things, on the one hand, and as a matrix internalized by the actors, on the other. These theoretical schemas made it possible to resolve the classic problem of the 'place of culture' and thereby to make comprehensible the harmony, revealed by field studies, between the principal cultural features identified on the basis of objective traces and the individual behaviours of the actors who act and think in the framework of a specific culture.

I shall not dwell here on the many critiques to which culturalist analyses have given rise. One of the most important consists in identifying the difficulties involved in attempts to trace the geographical and temporal limits of a specific culture and to objectify it cartographically, an endeavour that risks over-determining what are in fact

fuzzy entities (Amselle and M'Bokolo 1985). In Bourdieu's work on social classes, the theory of habitus serves in particular to shift away from classes as objective totalities or, if one prefers, as structures, to the behaviours, interpretations and even feelings of the agents who fill these classes. Most importantly, Bourdieu carries out this operation while avoiding Popper's curse. For Bourdieusian sociology, the members of a given social class possess if not the same habitus then at least more or less similar ones because, especially during their elementary education, they have had identical experiences on the basis of which they have internalized relatively similar schemas of perception and action. It then becomes possible to account for their spontaneous sympathy towards one another, for their mutual attraction (for example, in love relations) and, especially, for their tendency to react in the same way to events that affect them.

This schema is particularly useful as a way of accounting for the relation that is instituted among the members of the ruling classes. The spirit of connivance they manifest towards one another, especially when it is a matter of defending their privileges, can be interpreted without appealing to explicit concertation, and, consequently, without being susceptible to the charge of 'conspiracy theory'. Any mode of domination surely presupposes one form or another of coordination or, to use Bourdieu's terms, of 'orchestration without a conductor'. This theoretical schema makes it possible to reactivate the notion of social class that has been challenged by methodological individualism. In certain respects, this process is comparable, at least formally, to the way generative grammar offers a solution to the problem of the 'locus of language', no less thorny a problem than that of the 'locus of culture' or the 'culture of class'. The description of a language, in fact, presupposes that an open set of linguistic means be taken into account. These means are indexed after being collected from a large number of speakers, no one of whom has mastered them all. Giving up substantive description, which is in principle unlimited, in favour of the search for generative schemas internalized by speakers and/or by actors makes it possible to grasp the way in which, as a speaker/actor oneself, one can comprehend – in the double sense of decoding and grasping sympathetically - the words and actions of other speakers/actors. All this is possible, even if one has not pronounced or accomplished them oneself in advance because they are products of the same schemas.

As we know, this way of getting around Popper's problem has been the object of numerous critiques. Certain of these – which I mentioned earlier in relation to culturalism – stress the difficulty presented by the

closing off of a stock of homogeneous experiences on which a class culture might rely. Others note that the claim, sometimes derived from the theory of habitus, that one can not only interpret utterances and behaviours but also, as it were, predict their realization, once the habitus of the speaker/actor has been established, fails to take into account what is owed to the situation in which the utterance and/or the action is inserted. Understood in the strong sense, habitus can take the unacceptable form of an internalized programme. Understood in the weak sense, though, it dissolves in the vague idea of 'social personality' or 'basic personality', to use Abram Kardiner's expression (Boltanski 2003). This is to say that the theory of habitus, because it was intended to dramatize structures and persons together, was not enough to silence Popper-inspired reservations and may even have stimulated them. Moreover, the brief excerpt from Nathalie Heinich's book with which I opened this chapter targets in particular those sociologists who take their inspiration from Pierre Bourdieu's work, about which Heinich has recently published a very critical book in which charges of practising a sociology of suspicion and conspiracy are part of the subtext (Heinich 2007).

The microsociological approach

Let us now look briefly at two other paths that sociology has followed, or carved out, in order to escape from Popper's curse. In one direction, we find tendencies that, despite their diversity, have a shared inclination to orient research primarily towards observation and analysis of situated actions and interactions; in the other, we find network analyses.

In the 1980s, in France, sociologists inspired by ethnomethodology, phenomenology or interactionism, and more generally by approaches rooted in pragmatism, were often scholars steeped in Marxism, structuralism or Bourdieusian sociology. These researchers were sensitive to the critiques to which those tendencies had been subjected, but they were unwilling to make the great leap that would have consisted in adopting methodological individualism and its underlying neoliberal political orientations. This option, sometimes justified through reference to postmodernity and the 'end of the great narratives', made it possible to get around the Popperian curse for at least two reasons. The first has to do simply with the scale on which observations are made. Taking the most diverse situations and describing what happens in them allows the researcher to unfold sociological descriptions that need not be encumbered with references to entities of great

size – states, social classes, capitalism and the like. Since the actors are at the centre of the analysis, they can be treated as subjects of action verbs without shocking the logical pluralism of descendants of the Vienna School, and the operations they carry out can be described with the help of the conceptual framework of theories of action.

But the second and much more decisive reason has to do with the way the social sciences, inspired by what has been called the linguistic turn, adopt as their preferential object the description and analysis of the way the 'actors themselves' designate the beings that make up their environment, whether these beings are close at hand or far away, whether they have a material envelope or not – in other words, the way which the actors *qualify* those beings, and in so doing contribute to 'performing' the social world. In this type of sociological discourse, we may well find references to large collective entities or institutions that a consistent individualist would hold to be pure fictions. But the justification would be that the actors 'themselves' brought these entities into their utterances, so that the sociologist, a mere recording chamber for the reports in which persons narrate their doings, is not required to take a position as to the ontological status of these entities. Thus, with respect to the theme that is our guiding thread, the sociologist may well mention, in texts that present the results of her research, the existence of local *intrigues* or of vast conspiracies – but only because those whom she has met have qualified processes at work in their environment, or on a planetary scale, by using these terms and developing descriptions aimed at justifying their use. Consequently, the sociologist need not question the truthvalue of such assertions, for example, by seeking evidence or criteria that would allow her to cast doubt on or validate the representations that have been transmitted to her.

And the same thing holds true for events. Let us take, for example, *affairs* that develop around particular cases in which certain actors recognize an injustice. What I have called affairs are events that, depending on their size, that is, on the number of persons that the defenders of a cause succeed in mobilizing in their favour, are usually treated in two different frameworks: in that of an interactionist microsociology, when they appear to be limited in scope, and in that of political history, when they are of greater size and importance and are deemed to have played a role in changes that have affected a statelevel society. The point of treating an affair as a *form* capable of being established and developed on different scales is precisely that doing so makes it possible to avoid the distinction between a micro level and a macro level. But it also permits the implementation of a specific

methodology that consists not in seeking clues or evidence that would make it possible to validate certain versions and not others – as eventfocused history often does - but rather to take as one's object the way the 'actors themselves' mean to distinguish between what really happened and what is false or questionable. In this way, one reaches the point of considering not the event properly speaking but the procedures and arrangements that accompanied its social construction or deconstruction. Let us note, moreover, that while this type of approach, which can be qualified as methodological relativism, does not pose insurmountable problems when the event in question does not involve the fundamental values to which the researcher is attached, it becomes very difficult to implement with regard to cases that involve his fundamental beliefs. Thus, for example, it is practically impossible for a scholar who lost several relatives in the Nazi camps to find the intellectual and moral resources that would allow him to study the affairs that grew up around Holocaust denials by adopting, even if only as a methodological option, the stance that would entail treating the various versions in conflict in symmetrical fashion - that is, by acting as though the question of the existence of the gas chambers were uncertain. This phenomenon, arising from empirical psychology and not from a theoretical determination, reveals the limits of this approach, although without invalidating it.

Nevertheless, we must note that this approach is of interest in that it emphasizes the creativity and inventiveness of the actors, and it reveals the social intelligence they demonstrate, whoever they may be. Or, put differently, it is interesting in that it takes the actors' competencies as its object (including, for example, their moral sense or their sense of justice [Boltanski 2012 (1990)]), and in so doing it reduces the distance between a clairvoyant sociologist and a transparent and invisible actor (in the classic versions of structuralism) or an actor who has been deceived (in its critical versions). But the approach has the disadvantage of making it very difficult, if not impossible, to establish a cartographic representation of the social world as a pre-existing cosmos that subjects individual action to a system of constraints. Ultimately, it even makes it impossible to fill the place of what had previously been called 'society' and what was presumed to constitute the very object of sociology.

Network analyses

In the sociology of social networks that developed in the 1980s and that was presented as a new paradigm based on a strictly relational

ontology (Parrochia 1993), we can see one more way of getting around Popper's curse. This theoretical position owes a great deal to Harrison White, Scott Boorman and Ronald Breiger¹⁰ (and, somewhat less directly, to Moreno's sociometry [Moreno 1947]); it benefits from a solid methodological framework and algorithms allowing for an automated treatment (developed by Ronald Breiger, among others); from this position, no entity is presupposed, although collective entities may eventually emerge when the analysis is complete. According to Alain Degenne and Michel Forsé, '[n]etwork analysis assumes there is no way of knowing in advance how groups or social positions come about, i.e., how combinations of relations are formed' (1999 [1994]: 2). From this position, the structure or form of the network constitutes the principal constraint capable of engendering 'emerging effects'. It follows that the analysis of networks can support a claim to constitute an architecture in which the opposition between individualism and holism is surpassed, since 'structure is the emerging effect of interactions' (ibid.: 10). Network construction in fact makes it possible to set up modes of totalization based on a generalized connectivity; these modes remain independent of the singularity of the relations identified and the beings that they connect. The latter may be either human or non-human beings, as is the case in the work of Michel Callon and Bruno Latour. Finally, because networks are open by construction, and because their limits depend essentially on the scope of the researcher's inquiry, they transcend the micro/macro opposition. One can always extend a network by connecting beings that would otherwise remain isolated and thereby devoid of signification. Networks thus make it possible to conceive of objects that lie between the 'crystallized form' defined by stable but closed connections and the 'chaotic unformed' within which no connection allows us to go from one element to another several times along the same path. 11

Network analysis, by the same token as the other radical forms of structuralism, thus makes it possible actually to get rid of the cumbersome and unseemly objects that shocked Popper. This objective is explicitly proclaimed, moreover, by Harrison White and his collaborators in their foundational 1976 article. Sociology, they write in the preamble to the long methodological work published in the *American Journal of Sociology*, continues to convey notions that, like those of 'category' or 'class', are legacies from the nineteenth century; these notions transport the archaic nineteenth-century vision of a closed, compartmentalized world into the present. It is time, they add, to leave that outdated representation behind and forge descriptive tools adapted to the open character of modern societies.¹²

Networks and connivances

In relation to Popper's criticisms, the analysis of social networks presents an additional advantage: that of liquidating conspiracies. which turn out to be dissolved in the immense weave of relations among nodes, whether or not these are filled by persons. By the same token, sociology escapes the accusation of giving in to 'conspiracy theories'. This is easy to see if we consider the evolution of the term 'network', which first served (and still does, in its ordinary usage) to designate relations among individuals that, being neither transparent nor for the most part legally instituted, could be unveiled as illegitimate and as founded on connivances serving hidden interests to the detriment of the public good. This was still the case, for example, of a book written by two journalists (French Connections: Networks of Influence), which sought to bring to light the various networks active in France in the 1990s ('Protestants', 'Jews', 'Freemasons', 'Catholics', 'homosexuals', 'former Trotskvites', 'die-hard right-wing activists', 'intellectuals' and so on) (Coignard and Guichard 2000 [1997]). Conversely, in the sociological paradigm of networks, such unities could not be identified, still less pinned down, because analysis of the connections between the various individuals who made up these 'networks' would be in no way different from the analyses obtained by tracing the diagram of relations among any other individuals. At the very most, such an analysis might be able to identify the existence of denser relations in certain places on the diagram.

Nevertheless, we must note that these elegant network analyses pose problems somewhat similar to the ones we observed in the case of methodological individualism, and especially in the case of the radical forms of structuralism. They tend to unify all possible representations of the social world, and in so doing they tend to lose sight of the specificity that places, domains, fields and the like take on in the actors' eyes. On the basis of a strictly reticular description, it becomes hard to distinguish a work camp from a summer camp. In particular, every critical perspective is kept at a distance, which is probably one of the reasons why management science has quickly taken hold of this mode of constructing social reality. But, in this case, too, the experience of the actors is for the most part ignored.

It would be difficult, for example, relying on a methodologically orthodox sociological network analysis, to write a book like *Le président des riches: enquête sur l'oligarchie dans la France de Nicolas Sarkozy* (The president of the rich: inquiry into oligarchy in Nicolas Sarkozy's France). This book was published in 2010 by two

sociologists, Michel Pinçon and Monique Pinçon-Charlot, who are recognized specialists in the study of the upper classes; nevertheless, their goal is to describe the privileged links that connect 'politicians', 'businessmen', 'large-scale landowners' and major figures in 'the press, the arts, and literature'. The links that unite them are 'familial and rooted in common school trajectories or geographical origins. Ideologically close to one another, the members of the network come from the same social milieu. The connecting threads among them suggest a spider's web, or, better, one of those three-dimensional constructions in which all the points are connected to all the others' (Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot 2010: 39). The authors add that the

members of this oligarchy populate the boards of Total and BNP Paribas, meet in the salons of the Automobile Club or at a Century Club lecture, in the boxes at the Longchamp stadium or on the Mortefontaine golf course. They run across one another in an antiques shop on the quai Voltaire or in a gallery on the Avenue Matignon, and they go to the same dinners. The fact that they belong to the same associations for the defence of the patrimony, the same lobbying groups and the same alumni associations ends up erasing any cleavages that might have been created by their specialized functions or sectors of activity. Not to mention the endogamic marriages that multiply the familial links at the heart of the cultural broth in which the governing class reproduces itself. (Ibid.)

A network purist would not fail to reproach Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot for using most of the terms (such as the names of persons, places and businesses) that nourish their description of the social bonds that make up the 'network' they study, and above all the very term 'governing class' (classe dirigeante). The purist would probably also be put off by the qualifications that these sociologists associate with the names ('ideologically close', 'oligarchy') and by the metaphors to which they resort ('threads woven', 'cultural broth'). It is important to recognize, however, that without the names, the qualifications and even the metaphors, the 'network' to which the work is devoted would lose a great deal of its specificity and thus much of the interest that its study presents. At the beginning of their book, to explain what a network is, Alain Degenne and Michel Forsé insert an illustration representing a map of Corsica¹³; alongside the map, there are diagrams identifying networks among different points of the territory (road networks, economic flow patterns, and so on) whose contours have been abolished. If this illustration 'speaks' to us, as it were, it is precisely because of the contrast between the cartographic

image of Corsica, which allows any reader with the slightest familiarity with the geography of France and its territories to recognize the island in question easily, and a tracery of points and lines that, detached from their substantive rootedness in a territory, would speak to no one, with the possible exception of a geographer who specializes in network diagrams.

What to do with multipositionality?

One of the problems raised by the type of study of which we have just seen an example concerns the relation between the entities that sociology identifies, legally defined entities and the entities I have called narrative. This problem, which we have already encountered, has to do with the possibility that an individual may belong to an unlimited number of entities, and in particular to various legally defined entities. We are thus dealing with a problem of what can be called *multiposi*tionality (Boltanski 1973b). Observing that a person occupies a place in government or on a board of directors, that she belongs to a family, that she is on the faculty of a prominent educational institution or a member of a certain club – all entities whose contours are more or less clear and whose goals are more or less defined by law – is not a very innovative sociological operation. But even though it can be deemed methodologically erroneous, for example by a specialist in networks, it is not open to any particular moral or political criticism. The same thing does not hold true if the purpose of the analysis is to trace an actor or several actors (in the sense in which we speak of tracing merchandise) and to follow his or her or their itinerary in a plurality of entities, each with its own objectives (such as educating the young, providing political leadership to a state, making the economic system work, promoting certain types of entertainment and so on).

Bringing to light the plurality of memberships and the multiplicity of connections that derive from these memberships allows entities of a new type to emerge – entities that a sociologist may seek to qualify by naming them. These entities have fuzzy contours, and their objectives are imprecise, but we may suppose that they concentrate *power*, in the sense that the power each person can draw from membership in a specific entity (there is power in being a member of a board of directors) is multiplied, both through multiple memberships and through the personal relationships that ensue. Now, raising questions about the way the domain of personal relationships – which, in a free society, are 'nobody's business' – and the way relationships based on

holding recognized positions in organizations, or on the role played by 'private conversations' or 'informal communications' in decisionmaking processes under the auspices of institutional authorities, 14 brings to the surface a troublesome question associated with the identification of 'paranoia'. This is the question of the relation between the unofficial and the official, which is, as we have seen, at the heart of charges of conspiracy and countercharges of succumbing to conspiracy theories. It is nevertheless hard for sociology – especially if it aims to be critical, in the sense that it seeks to describe and explain social asymmetries – to remain continually in the official register. This is especially the case if we recognize that a number of these asymmetries have grown out of unequal relations to institutional procedures and rules: certain individuals are required to follow these to the letter, while others can get around them, most notably by playing on the lack of distinction between public and private zones (Boltanski 2011 [2009]: 143-9).

One of sociology's difficulties stems from the fact that it studies both persons and entities that are not persons. We may qualify persons by referring to these entities (one is a member of the Council of State, another a member of the board of a big company, and so on). But (and this is fortunate) no entity is so globalizing or so totalizing that reference to it can condense the entire identity of a person, in the way that prices, in the framework of neoclassical economics, are presumed to contain all the information necessary to appreciate the quality of market goods (this presumption is contested, moreover, by the economics of incomplete data and data asymmetries¹⁵ or the economics of conventions¹⁶). It falls to the ordinary metaphysics of members of our societies to recognize as persons beings that cannot be reduced to an accumulation of properties and therefore cannot be known in their totality, and cannot be known once and for all, even by the actor involved; in action, this actor must be 'willing to risk the disclosure' without knowing 'whom he reveals when he discloses himself in deed or word' (Arendt 1958: 180). And likewise, this ordinary metaphysics must take into account the fact that these beings are endowed with a memory that allows them to transport the traces of earlier encounters and trials through time and space, whether these events have been beneficial or harmful to them.¹⁷

The liberal division between public life, which is supposed to be subject to a requirement of transparency, and private life, ¹⁸ understood as the dwelling-place of intimacy, even secrecy (a division that is structurally homologous with the difference between the official and the unofficial), thus serves as support for a number of critical

operations. 19 In particular, this division underlies operations that focus on disclosing to the public the hidden sources of power that benefit persons in official positions, both institutionally and individually, when the holding of such positions is associated with the exercise of a power perceived as legitimate in the sense that it is limited, controlled and transparent. We may think of the denunciations through which certain persons, who thereby run the risk of being called paranoid, reveal the private use of public goods and privileges, or the transformation of assets acquired in the circle of private relations into prerogatives inscribed in the public sphere. But the analysis of these criss-crossings between the domestic polity and the civic polity – to borrow the terminology used in On *Iustification*²⁰ – is also at the origin of sociological work whose added value has to do in part with the *supplement* of *information* that it brings to common knowledge. And it is precisely in this respect that it serves critique. Critique would be reduced to virtually nothing in a social and political world that treated the difference between public and private as sacred, and in which information supposed to be associated with private life was taboo, so that only official information would be authorized to nourish the public debate - in which case there would no longer be anything like 'debate'. Moreover, as we know, this is how 'totalitarian' societies work.

Sociological inquiries, journalistic inquiries, police inquiries

Inquiry is the principal tool of sociology. This approach may be supported by a wide range of operations: extensive interviews, questionnaires designed to provide data for statistical analysis, archival research, information-gathering via the media, internal reports of organizations, directories, administrative documents and so on. But sociologists are not the only ones who undertake inquiries. Some of the means they use are available to other information specialists, first and foremost journalists (especially those whose work is called 'investigative') but also police officers, information agencies reporting to a nation-state and even increasing numbers of large private companies.²¹

Among sociologists, legal and police inquiries are never mentioned unless it is to express indignation about them; still less is said about the type of inquiries undertaken by spies (in contrast, espionage manuals refer to 'academic research' and to the 'social sciences' in order to point out the similarities and differences between the two types of

investigation²²). As for journalists' inquiries, most sociologists surely mean to define their own work differently, even though they do not hesitate to use journalists' results when these appear reliable. And it must also be noted that many sociologists intervene directly – as 'experts' – in the media (op-ed pieces in newspapers, radio and television talk shows and so on). The character – ambiguous, to say the least - of the relations between sociology and journalism, which has often been left implicit, has now become an object of reflection, especially among scholars inspired by pragmatic sociology who seek to analyse the ways in which the grammars underlying these two activities diverge, and also to note what they have in common (Lemieux 2010). This research breaks down a taboo by bringing together two professions whose members often have the same educational background (in political science, for example) but who belong to organizations (such as the CNRS [National Center for Scientific Research] in one case, a major newspaper in the other) whose operations subject the activity to very different constraints. Still, for a naive and distant observer, if they are clearly distinguished by their means, their goals, and the types of documents in which their results appear (specialized works published in social science collections, magazine articles or books aimed at a 'popular' audience, confidential reports), these differing ways of conducting investigations are not absolutely foreign to one another. This is attested by the possibility already noted that sociologists will make use of journalistic inquiries, but also the possibility that journalists will be be led to conduct legal, administrative or even police investigations when they succeed in obtaining confidential documents through the intermediary of 'well-placed' sources.

The association between the different types of inquiries is probably especially well-founded in cases where the goal is to interpret a contemporary incident and/or a social change that is salient enough to be an 'event'. Such an inquiry will focus on specific individuals, presumably prominent or 'typical' ones; investigators will undertake to follow the relations – official or unofficial, legal or illegal and so on – between these individuals and a certain number of other persons or entities. The investigative procedure then consists in gathering information about these individuals and 'tracing' them, as it were, so as to reconstitute their itineraries in various spaces or organizations while registering the traces left by their contacts, in order to sketch out the circle of their relations little by little.²³ The formal resemblance between sociology and journalism is particularly evident when a sociologist investigates a group that is neither legally established (as is the case for the members of certain organizations) nor even

pre-defined in the framework of a taxonomy based on a combination of criteria (for example, the nomenclature of socio-professional categories). Especially in cases where the sociologist sets out to sketch the contours of an 'emerging' group that has not yet received the sort of official recognition signalled by the recording of an administrative nomenclature, the undertaking will consist in starting with 'typical examples'.²⁴ The latter may have been identified in advance on the basis of common-sense knowledge or because they had been spotted and already partly stylized by writers or journalists (for example, 'yuppies', 'inner-city youth', 'precarious intellectuals', 'the excluded'²⁵ and so on).

Certain persons whom sociologists see as corresponding more or less to these types are selected for interviews. As the inquiry proceeds, each person who has agreed to be interviewed may be asked to supply the sociologist with additional contacts ('snowball sampling'). In other cases, the sociologist relies on the interview conducted – when it takes the form of a 'life story', for instance – to identify and if possible to contact other persons with whom the informant has, or has had, direct relations, and whose name has been mentioned during the interview. When the person at the heart of the inquiry is a wellknown personality, data of the same order can be obtained from other informants or tracked down in directories or on the internet. This is often the way journalists proceed when they set out to write an 'unauthorized' biography of someone in the public eye with the goal of pinning down the extent and significance of that person's power (for example, the investigation of Alain Minc by Laurent Mauduit - a journalist who worked for Libération and later for Le Monde [Mauduit 2007]). To be sure, the aims of sociologists and those of journalists concerned about their respectability are very different from those of policemen or secret service agents establishing records or files on a public figure and on the milieus he or she frequents; their methods differ, too, since sociologists and journalists do not rely on coercion, threats, lies or 'manipulation' of informants. Still, sociologists frequently hesitate to share with their informants all the data they themselves have acquired about the goals of their inquiry, its dimensions or its backers. One of the reasons generally invoked to justify leaving the object of the inquiry vague – for example, by avoiding the use of a term to qualify a group that the person being investigated might recognize, adopt or use in turn – is methodological: the investigator wants to avoid 'inducing responses'. The idea is that overly precise questions would elicit stereotypical answers, or answers intended to satisfy whatever the interviewee believes the

investigator expects, so that the interviewer would no longer be able to uncover the representation that the 'actor himself' gives of his own situation and his social status. Another motive, especially when the group on which the inquiry bears is socially devalorized, may be the fear of alienating or shocking the persons interviewed by giving them the feeling that the interviewer is interested in them inasmuch as they bear a stigma or, conversely, when the inquiry focuses on 'elites', the risk of arousing suspicion by making informants fear that the inquiry might have critical objectives. (In the 'upper echelons' it is often believed, generally wrongly, that sociologists cast a critical gaze on the agencies of power.)

As for the intended audience for the inquiry, the researcher may deem it preferable not to give out this information when the study, carried out under a guarantee of scientific impartiality, must nevertheless lead not only to publication in a specialized journal but also to an advance report submitted to the government agency or business that commissioned or helped finance the study. These fears are not necessarily groundless in a 'self-conscious society' where the information supplied by the work of sociologists who have been put in the position of 'experts' is imparted within a circle at the heart of which scientific studies, journalistic essays, administrative reports and political decisions intersect and sometimes merge. The best-informed interviewees – which means, generally speaking, the best-educated – are certainly not unaware of this, even if they do not have the means to reconstitute all the links in this hermeneutic circle whose contribution to the interpretation of events produced by the actors who hold some power – and consequently, to the determination of reality – is undeniable.

In the examples we have considered up to now, the purpose of a given inquiry, for the sociologists involved, was primarily to sketch out the contours and analyse the properties of a social entity that had not yet been subject to statistical scrutiny; for journalists, it was to shed light on an event by studying the way it unfolded and examining the attachment network of a specific individual who may have participated in it. In neither case was there any mention of conspiracy, even if, from a strictly individualist standpoint, the operations undertaken in the inquiry could be denounced as stemming, more or less, from a 'conspiracy theory'. The same cannot be said of police inquiries, and especially not of pre-emptive inquiries such as those carried out by central intelligence services; aimed at prevention, these seek to explore milieus or 'circles of influence' (a term that refers to fuzzy relational sets in contradistinction to 'organizations' or 'movements'

that have been officially declared as such) so as to identify something like the formation of *conspiracies*. The latter are not necessarily oriented towards a specific act, and their disclosure may precede the unlawful events that the inquiry was aimed at preventing. But in cases of infraction, the inquiry must be able to give these fuzzy 'circles of influence' the more precise contours of 'illicit associations' so as to ensure preventive incarceration not only of the actor or actors accused of some infraction, but also of persons belonging to their social environment or to the same 'circle of influence'.

However, in a state under the rule of law, these collective arrests cannot be totally arbitrary. They are required to be based on legally recognized motives for incrimination. These motives must be spelled out in such a way as to circumscribe the collective entities with vague contours that include persons whose presumed involvement in the illegal acts under consideration (whether or not they have actually been carried out) may be quite indirect and thus very hard to prove. The mere fact of knowing a person who has been incriminated, of having some relationship with that person or even being attached to that person by family ties or by belonging to the same association (athletic, religious, neighbourhood or the like) is not a sufficient reason to justify incarceration. Thus, legal categories authorizing such operations must be available. In the case of the struggle against collective entities that are presumed to be actually or potentially criminal, however, the work of legal definition faces problems similar to those that we encountered in the previous chapter with regard to efforts in the context of political science to find criteria making it possible to define what is meant by 'conspiracy'.

Let us look, for example, at a book that legal scholar Maria Luisa Cesoni devoted to 'organized crime'. One of the purposes of the work is to spell out criminal charges such as 'criminal associations' or, more recently, 'organized crime, corruption, money laundering, fraud, [or] terrorism' in transnational contexts. The activities targeted are quite diverse, 'ranging from international car thefts to the black market in nuclear products, from managing clandestine immigration to illicit gambling operations, from traffic in women and children to corruption'. These activities 'involve different types of actors, differing degrees of organization in their management and various possible combinations with entirely legal activities' (Cesoni 2004: 4). These new legal arrangements correspond in particular to a 'policy of general prevention' aimed at 'secret societies', 'gangs of professional criminals', and 'organizations with mafia-like methods' or acting legally' (6). Nevertheless, the author adds, while 'the attempt

to identify unequivocally an object such as "organized crime" or "organized criminality", making it possible to develop international comparative research, has been carried out by various researchers', it has ended up with an 'acknowledgement of impossibility, based on the excessive diversity of the phenomena generally summed up under these labels'. But she goes on to say that 'beyond the differing contents that the various authors attribute to the terms "organized criminality" and "mafia", the latter phenomenon is often viewed in the most recent studies as the criminal phenomenon par excellence, the one that endangers democratic, political and economic institutions, if it does not become their instrument' (11). As this remark emphasizes, one of the difficulties faced by the legal definition of 'organized criminality' is, beyond the fact that its organized character is often hard to bring to light, the fact that it can cross the boundaries between legality and illegality, between institutions and mafias²⁶ and between dealings undertaken by independent actors and those inspired surreptitiously by nation-states.²⁷ Hence the difficult problem of clearly identifying 'the boundary between licit and illicit' (Cesoni 2004: 12). Such attempts at definition are most often based on 'police reconstructions'. Now, 'the information made available by the police is influenced by the police's own representation of the phenomenon (as well as by the means available to it for the investigation). We must note that the police operate upstream from incriminations, often on the basis of their own operational definition' (17). One of the problems raised by the type of police investigations to which Cesoni refers, which often have a preventive character, is twofold: how to determine which links can be considered suspect; and how to delimit the network formed by the accumulation of these links. This is easy to see, for example, in the case of anti-terrorist laws, 28 which make it possible not only to arrest an individual for an act that he or she has not yet committed but is suspected of intending to commit, but also to hold in custody an unlimited number of persons with whom that individual has maintained relationships, or who have even simply been seen in a place that that individual has regularly frequented (a place of worship, for example, when an accusation of 'Islamic terrorism' has been made).

As these reflections suggest, the differences between sociological, journalistic and police inquiries are not primarily epistemological in nature. All three types raise the question of how to identify the relevant collective entities and how to interpret the relations between the individuals identified and the collective entities whose contours may be more or less fuzzy. This relation has to do above all with the way the relation between the investigator and the target of the inves-

tigation is set up, and especially with the respect and the tact, on the order of 'prudent practice' (Lemieux 2010: 284–98), that the former manifests with regard to the latter in a relation that obeys, or ought to obey, strict rules. The first rule requires making the data anonymous so as to avoid damaging the reputation and even, in certain particularly problematic circumstances (like those of civil war, evoked earlier in connection with Natalia Suarez's work), the safety of the persons questioned. This requirement does not apply as stringently to historians since the persons on whom their work focuses are usually dead, often long since, but it is a problem for journalists who work in the heat of the moment: they are particularly attentive to the 'verifiability' of the information they contribute, and this concern often makes it necessary to use proper names. As we know, this requirement is not respected in the least by the police, whose goal is to target and record information about individuals, and whose complete absence of respect for ordinary persons, who are always treated more or less as suspects, is authorized by the defence of public safety, which is today the chief argument on which limitations of freedom are based (Rigouste 2009).

More fundamentally, the difference between these three types of inquiries has to do with the relations they maintain with the question of *judgement* when the investigation has individuals in its sights. A judicial inquiry always has judgement as its ultimate goal and, even in cases in which the accused person is exonerated, the mere fact of having been 'suspected' and 'mixed up in an affair' may have detrimental effects on that person's later life. Journalists do not have the authority to judge. Nonetheless, the information they contribute resembles judgement in many cases, and the threat of making certain facts public, even the simple fact that a given person refused to meet or speak with them, constitutes one of the forceful arguments they can invoke to induce potential informants to confide in them. It is owing to this power over reputations, moreover, that journalists can play an essential role in the workings of democracies by serving as counter-weights to the power of the governing authorities and, for example, becoming advocates for causes that would be lost if left to the police and legal agencies alone.

But a sociological inquiry differs from the two other types of inquiry we are considering in that, if it does not radically renounce judgement, it at least excludes judgements formulated about individual persons, which is why sociology is often accused of relativism – a particularly odious offence, it would seem, in the eyes of our contemporaries. This refusal to judge prevails in all cases, even – even especially – in the

case of critical sociology. This is why the latter is often led to refer to systems, arrangements or structures, another practice for which it has received abundant criticism, as we have seen. But it is on this condition that it can avoid targeting individuals. 'I do not by any means depict the capitalist and the landowner in rosy colours', Marx wrote in the preface to the first German edition of *Capital*. 'But individuals are dealt with here only in so far as they are the personifications of economic categories, the bearers [*Träger*] of particular class-relations and interests' (Marx 1977 [1867]: 92). Sociology is not a detective story, still less a spy story, even if it sometimes tries to solve mysteries and even if it finds itself confronting the question of conspiracy.

A journalistic account and a sociological study of the same event

To grasp some of the constraints imposed on sociological writing as a literary genre, let us look into *La face cachée du pétrole* (The hidden side of oil, 2006), by Éric Laurent, a journalist who specializes in international relations and has worked for *Le Figaro* and *France Culture*. This author, presented as a 'prominent reporter', has published a number of books in paperback format intended for a broad public. I shall try to identify the features in the type of rhetoric he uses in this book that would be criticized in a work of academic sociology: for example, if a thesis director were critiquing the writing of an advisee. Complaints would probably be directed first and foremost at anything reminiscent of spy novels, even if the facts and events recounted were all presented as (and might well be) authentic.

Here are a few examples from Laurent's book:

- (a) The first and most obvious: the very frequent reference to *secrets* that the author claims to be unveiling ('a carefully disguised reality' [Laurent 2006: 12]; 'the truth is very different from the legend' [19]).
- (b) The establishment of hidden ties between actors who at first glance appear distant from one another, or antagonistic; this evokes the rhetoric of conspiracy ('three hundred men control the West' [59]).
- (c) The accumulation of proper names mingling prominent individuals and 'second fiddles' acting under cover.
- (d) The constant presence of the subject of the discourse ('I attended'; 'I established some contacts'; 'I discovered', and so on).

- (e) The blending of the story of the inquiry's results with the story of the inquiry itself ('I met him in his palace'; 'I discover the etiquette of the court, a place of the most servile expressions of homage' [28]; 'a discussion with David Rockefeller is a strange experience' [152]).
- (f) An abundant use of metaphor ('the last act of a play "full of sound and fury" . . . always performed behind closed doors' [228]).
- (g) An accumulation of details not explicitly connected with the general argument ('He greeted me wearing a turtleneck shirt' [35]; 'The low table that separates us is covered with an embroidered white cloth and, in a strange tic, at the end of every response Speer runs his fingers over the cloth' [79]).
- (h) A mix of references to individuals, legally constituted entities, and the type of entities I have called narrative ('a community of mystic Spaniards' [47]).
- (i) Very rapid associations between events that belong to different series and are apparently unconnected.
- (j) Finally, numerous changes of scale that shift the reader from the front office of a world leader to the back office of the Iranian secret service to the stall of a Middle Eastern merchant.

The particularities of the journalistic genre as compared to those of the sociological genre are even more obvious if we compare *La face cachée du pétrole* to another work, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005 [1999]), which belongs to the domain of sociology. The two books are almost contemporaneous, and they both focus on the years 1970–2000. They both offer descriptions situated on various levels, sometimes macrosocial (on a global scale, in the case of *La face cachée*, and on the national scale of France in the case of *The New Spirit* – a limitation in the latter case that has often been criticized, moreover), and sometimes microsocial (meetings of heads of state or of experts in *La face cachée*, a business or even a workshop in *The New Spirit*). Similarly, both works feature legally defined entities (for example, the OECD), individual entities and sociological entities that could be characterized as vague (first and foremost, capitalism, in *The New Spirit*).

Nevertheless, despite these similarities, the differences are striking. In *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, the presence of the speakers is very discreet (it is suggested only in the introduction, the postscript and, in the new paperback edition, the postface). The material undertakings that were necessary to collect the data or to carry out the inquiries are not described in detail, and commentaries about them are mainly of

the methodological order. While proper names of prominent figures, politicians in particular, do appear in the book (for example, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing), references to individuals are much less frequent than in La face cachée du pétrole, and they are never accompanied by descriptions of a person's mood or physical condition. The importance attributed to the paratext is also very different in the two cases. In The New Spirit, the statements that appear in the book are accompanied by a very large number of notes and references to other books or articles (several hundred, as opposed to fewer than a hundred in Laurent's book). Both books are animated by the desire not only to describe but also to explain changes that took place during the period in question. Thus, in both cases we find causal arrangements set up so as to attribute the appearance of certain events to the actions of certain entities. But these entities are not the same. In La face cachée, they are primarily either countries, companies, heads of state or heads of major businesses (the type of actors who appear in journalistic accounts of major international meetings such as Davos or the G20), or else individuals who are much less well known but whose occult yet nevertheless determining role the author seeks to reveal. Not to mention secret services, which are invoked very often in La face cachée (bringing this book closer to spy stories) but completely absent in The New Spirit, where the entities invoked most often have a structural, that is, impersonal, character.

The same thing could be said about the events selected. La face cachée du pétrole deals primarily with events whose importance was immediately recognized by political and economic authorities or by the media (for example, the 1973 'oil crisis'). The New Spirit of Capitalism focuses rather on slow and gradual changes or on scattered, sectorial events that did not receive much attention when they occurred, except occasionally on the part of other sociologists; analyses of these events seek to show, after the fact, that they constituted a system of sorts, even if it would be a mistake to believe that they had been explicitly planned. (Examples might include the gradual shift in the modalities of French social policy in the mid-1970s, after the failure of the 'new society', or the business restructurings and reorganizations of production processes that were introduced soon afterwards.) Still, we have to acknowledge that in both books we find references to a sort of global intentionality: La face cachée invokes the will of powerful agencies and people to keep control of oil as a strategic resource, while The New Spirit invokes efforts made by the agencies subsumed under the fuzzy term 'capitalism' to break out of the crisis of profits and productivity between the mid-1960s and the

mid-1970s. We have to recognize nevertheless that this intentionality, associated in both cases with the principle of socio-historical change, is much less embodied in persons or organizations in *The New Spirit* than in *La face cachée*.

A sharp difference between the two books has to do with the way the concepts that support the analyses are treated. La face cachée du pétrole does not lack a conceptual infrastructure; without one, there would have been no way to tell the story of the events, of the intentions that presided over their occurrence or even of the inquiry itself (the latter being a story to which a good deal of space is devoted in the book). But the concepts or categories mobilized most often remain implicit in the descriptions; they are not presented in their own right or justified in relation to a particular conceptual framework. Conversely, the descriptions featured in The New Spirit of Capitalism are interspersed with numerous explicitly conceptual analyses: these interrupt the narrative in such a way that the book can be read from two different viewpoints. On the one hand, it can be seen as a description of what took place, during a specific period, in the social world (a profound change in the contours attributed to reality and in the arrangements set up simultaneously to stabilize it, to impose constraints on it and to justify those constraints). On the other hand, it can be read as a description of what took place in the field of sociological theory, viewed as an organum aimed at supplying categories that allow researchers to organize their work in such a way that different empirical descriptions can be integrated into larger pictures supported by a common conceptual framework.

The enumeration of the stylistic features encountered in La face cachée du pétrole – features often found, moreover, in journalistic reports that borrow some of their techniques from fiction (and which, in the case we have just examined, are sometimes reminiscent of spy novels) – and the comparison with The New Spirit of Capitalism are not intended, obviously, to discredit one book in favour of the other. Although I am co-author, with Eve Chiapello, of *The New Spirit*, my aim is not to show that the latter work is more 'serious' or more 'credible', or even more 'scientific', than La face cachée. Moreover, the problem addressed here has nothing to do with judging whether one particular work is better than another (there are certainly sociological works superior to The New Spirit, and journalistic works superior to La face cachée). The question really concerns the contributions and the limitations of different genres. Since I am a sociologist and not a journalist, what matters especially to me is giving the reader a way of seeing the considerable work of censorship and self-censorship on

which writing in the social sciences is based. As we know, this selfcensorship is an internalized form of the judgement of one's peers. It is visible not simply in the extraordinary accumulation of precautions that characterizes this writing, of which the abundant paratextual features and references are only the most obvious sign; it is also manifested in modalizing formulas such as 'more or less', 'frequently', 'it is as though ...', 'nothing prevents us from supposing that ...', 'especially', 'in particular', and so on; the accumulation of such formulas contributes significantly to the length of the texts stemming from our disciplines, and it may also, I have to admit, make the task of reading rather laborious. The rhetorical norms that 'require' us to say what we want to say in a certain manner would not be too detrimental if they were not also accompanied by even more constraining norms that 'prevent' us from saving certain things.²⁹ The latter have to do in particular with the way events and thus entities – and especially persons or 'prominent individuals', narrative entities and entities suspended between the official and the unofficial – are manifested within a text. They can only find their places there through the intermediary of two rhetorical registers, both of which have the effect of dissolving them.

In the first register, the event is envisaged as the result of an encounter between 'performances' of a set consisting of countless beings (human or non-human) envisaged as actors, that is, inasmuch as their actions constitute the social world in which they are immersed. A given event is thus caught up in a framework formed by the interweaving of a multiplicity of actions and reactions, practices and representations, (micro-)powers and limited means; the actors' motivations and rationalities are similarly entangled. With respect to the question of the event, the effect is all the more paralysing in that the framework can only be presumed since no sociologist, no matter how hard-working, can have access to the resources that would be required to make the framework truly describable in all its dimensions. A second rhetorical register modifies the position adopted by the sociologist. This shift consists in envisaging a social world not in the process of being constructed but, taking the viewpoint of the whole, as in a sense already there. The most common way of describing the social world from this standpoint consists in identifying a set of constraints – teased out from the conjunction between an organizational approach and a statistical approach, often in association with a historical perspective – whose combinations can be identified as structures. But, in this case, the event loses most of its specificity, that is, its power, as a singularity that happens (and that might not have

happened), to make something new. It remains more or less present, to be sure, but only as one manifestation among others of forces that precede and follow it, and that, at best, gain access through its intermediary to consciousness – that is, as phenomena.

For a curious sociologist, reading a book like La face cachée du pétrole triggers contradictory reactions. From a sociological viewpoint, the book is far from fully satisfying, especially because it gives too much weight to the moods and decisions of the major players and agencies, and to the underhanded strategies carried out by second fiddles or semi-clandestine back offices, while giving insufficient weight to the forces engaged, to power relations, to the people involved in the confrontations described and to the social changes that are emerging 'from below'. But an ordinary reader may be satisfied to see events, about which he has heard scattered echoes from the media, integrated into a coherent, documented narrative within which they are linked in a way that makes sense. Is this type of satisfaction illicit in itself? Is it not part of the normal expectations that a reader may have when she opens a book of sociology – especially, let us be clear, if she is not a sociologist herself, that is, especially if her reading is less oriented towards the epistemological and formal properties of the book in question than towards its content?

One can certainly criticize a book like *La face cachée du pétrole*, not for inaccuracies of detail about, for example, the number of cars on the roads in the world, which would be costly to verify and about which the reader relies on the authority of the journalist-author, but for the rather heavy-handed way it argues for a thesis (in this case, the supremacy of the United States and the manoeuvrings of that country's leaders to retain it). This thesis can be debated, and it has been debated on blogs that challenge the book.³⁰ But critiques of the same type have been addressed to *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, recalling Max Weber's remark that descriptions and perhaps especially explanations are possible only with reference to 'value-rapport', that is, also with reference to a perspective, to interests, to concerns and perhaps to a cause (Weber 1949 [1905]: 157–61).

Given that sociology has as its vocation the shedding of light on contemporary reality from within (by proceeding, as it were, as though it envisaged that reality from an external point of view) in such a way as to make sense of what happens, and given that its interpretations must be offered to as broad an audience as possible so as to contribute to public debate, it is somewhat paradoxical that it is often caught off guard when it is confronted with the expectations aroused by an event that could be characterized as 'unanticipated' if that were not

something of a tautology. ³¹ In fact, the type of scientific requirements that sociology has adopted gives it access to only two types of entities, which sometimes remain oblivious to one another and sometimes enter into tension. One option consists in starting from individuals, taken into account either in statistical terms or in a monograph. In the first case, some of the behaviours of these individuals are selected in relation to pre-established categories and treated as statistically aggregated independent variables, an approach that tends to dissolve the unity of persons and their reasons for acting. In the second case, individuals are observed in specific situations, but at the price of a reduction in scale that makes their behaviours uninterpretable except in terms of theories of action, and this does not allow totalities to be taken into account. The other option consists in starting with collective entities or structures and unfolding these over a long stretch of time, essentially filtering out persons and what happens to them – but at the price, most often, of reifving the analytical frameworks whose contours tend to coincide with those of the existing centres of power, such as companies, organizations and, especially, political entities, nation-states above all.

The difficulty that sociology encounters when it tries to grasp its objects by relying on one of these options or the other becomes apparent as the relation between conceptual systems chiefly established in synergy with the political construction of the European nation-states, on the one hand, and a reality that, in the eyes of the actors, tends more and more sharply to free itself from the arrangements that were supposed to frame it, on the other hand, begins to fray. To overcome these obstacles, it would be necessary above all to have conceptual frameworks at one's disposal that could put into play causal relations grasped on different scales at the same time. It is indeed, in a way, a project of this sort that has inspired certain modern forms of the novel, forms, especially the large-scale social novels that began to appear in the second half of the nineteenth century, featuring both ordinary characters grappling with historical events that surpass them and powerful individuals who seek by their actions to control and influence these events. This literary project has constantly intersected with that of sociology, to the point that it is hard to tell which has served as the model for the other (Lepenies 1988 [1985]). But the major conceptual apparatuses that made these transfers of meaning possible collapsed in the almost uninterrupted crises and wars that marked the relations among European states during the twentieth century. To implement – or re-implement – these global frameworks, or to invent others,³² one would have to be in a position to shed the

fear and stupor that have been aroused by the unveiling – to which historians, sociologists and journalists have contributed – of the objective complicity between broadly ambitious literary or sociological narratives (the 'major narratives', the 'big stories') and the political actions carried out by nation-states, also broad in scope, but criminal in nature. Just as politics, beaten down for several decades now by these revelations, so sociology, which can never free itself completely from its dependence on political frameworks and orientations (Boltanski 2011 [2009]), is also convalescent. We can only hope – as doctors say – for a 'quick recovery' of the former, which, particularly by freeing itself from its subjection to the nation-state form (a form currently at the pinnacle of its power, and moribund), would open the way to a new future for the latter.

EPILOGUE

And History Copied Literature

The year The Thirty-Nine Steps was published, a writer in Prague, of whom John Buchan had certainly never heard, wrote a novel that was published thanks to his friend Max Brod only after his death ten years later (Kafka 1998 [1925]). I shall not presume to offer yet another interpretation of The Trial, which is probably among the books that have given rise to the highest number of exegeses, after the Bible. Nevertheless, the undeniable formal similarities that connect the situations featured in *The Trial* with the thematics of mystery, conspiracy and inquiry seem to me to bring to light the objective intentions, and what might be called the historial sense, of the two literary genres that have served as our guiding threads. By inverting and subverting the arrangements underlying crime novels and spy novels, genres whose success had marked the early twentieth century, The Trial unmasked them, as it were, and cast a doleful light not simply on those narratives, which were in principle intended only to entertain, but also on the conjunctures that had served as their counterparts in reality and that prefigured the tragic turn the history of Europe was to take. It thus revealed towards what those stories were endlessly and no doubt unconsciously tending, and perhaps also what they helped to bring about: the moment when the religion of the nation-state had developed to the point that it could manifest a self-reassuring 'moral indignation' by condemning crime while it was simultaneously committing crimes on a vast scale. As Jorge Luis Borges suggests, in the statement that serves as epigraph to this book (Borges 1999 [1944]: 144), what he presents – not innocently – as properly 'mind-boggling', has, as he knows, actually taken place. History has copied literature.²

As I see it, the 'machinic assemblage' on which *The Trial* is based (Deleuze and Guattari 1986 [1975]: 81–8) is constructed exactly

like that of a crime novel, but as its mirror image, symmetrical and reversed. Without undertaking a detailed analysis, I shall summarize the argument quickly, looking at features that are pertinent to the classic detective novels and/or spy novels.

Let us begin with the question of *mystery*. In detective fiction, the story begins with an enigmatic event. This event certainly has a meaning (most often someone has been killed), but to be understood as *meaningful*, it has to be *attributed* to some entity, usually a person or a group of persons. It is the search for that entity and the work of attribution that constitutes the main driving force of the narrative. A number of characters are viewed as suspects, and a detective has to discover which one is the author of the crime. In *The Trial*, this narrative situation is reversed since the guilty party is identified at the outset and a crime is immediately attributed to him. In contrast, the event presumed to be at the origin of the inquiry remains enigmatic. We do not know, and we shall never know, what happened.

Let us now consider the relation of the state to the actant designated in Greimassian terms as the opponent. In the classic spy novel, while the state is an organization, a transparent one, the adversary is often also an organization, but one that operates in secret; through unknown ramifications, it invades lawful organizations parasitically, up to the highest reaches of the state. Because the members of this organization disguise themselves, the reader, encountering a given character, cannot know a priori if the real identity of the one presented conforms in fact to his or her official identity, or if the character is in fact a member of the secret organization. Unlike the state, and unlike legal organizations in general, a subversive secret organization does not have clear contours. It takes the form of a network with fuzzy borders, so that its extension is unknown. In *The Trial*, this situation is reversed: it is the state organization that is presented as secret and undefined. It is never possible to know exactly whether a given character is independent of the state organization or is secretly playing a role in its operation, for example acting as an informer or a spy. Thus, to take just a few examples, the guards who come to arrest K. at the beginning of the novel do not wear uniforms that would allow them to be clearly identified as civil servants. As for the three young bank clerks whom K. discovers in Miss Bürnster's room, we do not know, as will be the case with most of the other characters (especially the priest), whether they are henchmen of the state organization or not. A legal organization has a hierarchical structure in which representatives of the state and persons holding authority are identified as such. Conversely, in spy novels, the true holders of power are generally

presented as remote, mysterious persons, designated by pseudonyms, whom the person conducting the investigation seeks to identify, often in vain. In *The Trial*, however, K. never deals with anyone but subordinates of the state apparatus, and the latter do not even know the identities of the dignitaries and authorities whose orders they are carrying out. The same holds true, of course, for laws and procedural rules: they are repeatedly mentioned, but, as in the case of mafias, they never become explicit, so that even those who invoke them seem to be unaware of their precise content.

The same sort of inversion affects the representation of reality as a whole. We have seen that, in the classic detective novels and/or spy novels, the mystery stands out against the background of a stabilized and predictable reality guaranteed by the nation-state. This sometimes minimal alteration of reality is the sign that puts someone on the track of the crime, when it does not already constitute a crime in itself. In *The Trial*, however, the situation is reversed: it is the intervention of a state-like entity in citizen K.'s life that troubles and alters a well-ordered reality. This alteration affects the attitudes of the people close to K.: they shift from trust to suspicion towards him. It affects K.'s own temperament (his sexual behaviour, previously limited to a weekly visit to a prostitute, becomes erratic), and it affects physical reality itself. Thus, the shapes of the rooms in the boarding house where K. lives and the spaces occupied by the furniture are modified the moment he is notified of his arrest. Similar distortions affect more or less all the places that are described in any detail; none of them presents its usual appearance. The most striking example – but there are many others – is that of the courtroom, located in the dark attic spaces of a rental building inhabited by riff-raff; it appears to be a featureless site, crowded with strange people, in which a political meeting is taking place. Recalling Freud's characterization of dreams, in a way, a single representation concentrates in itself a number of different associations, according to the mechanism of condensation. More precisely, as in spy novels, several realities are superimposed. The usual, normal reality is maintained, apparently the same as ever. K. is left at liberty. He still lives in the same boarding house, sees the same friends and goes to the same cafés. He still works in the same bank and his colleagues do not fail to celebrate his birthday as usual. But, under this facade of reality, another reality takes shape; its apparently unreal but actually much more real character challenges the reality of reality in the form reality had taken up to that point.

Another symmetrically inverse figure consists in projecting the detective onto the criminal. In crime fiction or spy fiction, the detec-

tive tries to identify the criminal, who, in contrast, tries to conceal his crime. In *The Trial*, however, K. sometimes adopts the behaviour of a criminal: for instance, he denies the existence of the unknown offence attributed to him and initially pretends to be amused at the joke before becoming indignant about a judicial error. At other times, he adopts the behaviour of a detective who is actively participating in the hunt for the criminal. He reaches the point of trying to figure out which of his own past actions could have been reprehensible, not in someone's imagination but in reality, without his knowledge, as it were. Or rather, he makes an effort to explore the various strata of his personality, the different personalities concentrated in his person and collected under his name, so as to discover to which of these one might attribute the misdeed - that is, the enigmatic event through which every non-inverted crime novel begins - that would justify the trial to which he is being subjected. It is this type of attitude, moreover, that led one commentator – Jürgen Born (citing Weiss) – to call The Trial the 'detective story of a soul' (quoted in Morel 1998: 57).

In *The Trial*, the state is omnipresent. But it appears only in the form of a vast conspiracy whose limits cannot be traced and about which one realizes, as the novel unfolds, that it tends to integrate in its mesh almost all of the characters who cross K.'s path. To be sure, The Trial can be read as a sort of quasi-clinical description of a case of paranoid delirium. A whole set of indications point in that direction, especially the way K. picks out elements in the situations in which he finds himself that strike him as abnormal and in which he recognizes 'signs' requiring interpretation on his part: signs destined especially for him. Everything in his environment starts to take on a troubling orientation devoid of immediate signification, and K., who embodies banality par excellence – that is, normality – thus sees reality, reality as a whole, growing rife with mysteries whose meaning he tries to discern. This is particularly true for the seemingly spontaneous jokes that people crossing his path make and that strike him painfully, as though they concealed a secret intention having to do with him. This delusion of persecution and interpretation is accompanied by a delusion of grandeur. The importance K. attributes to his own person, the enviable position he says he occupies in the bank for which he works, the eminent personages with whom he claims to be on familiar footing (for example, the prosecuting attorney) also constitute classic elements of the clinical picture of paranoia. And the same thing can be said of the sort of erotic frenzy, completely foreign to the wellordered life that K. was leading before, that grips him after his arrest. Manifested first by the kisses he thrusts upon his neighbour, Miss

Bürstner, the very evening when the guards show up in the boarding house where he lives, then by his relationship with the bailiff's wife, his unrestrained eroticism with Leni and his instrumental relations with women he thinks he is seducing (they are supposed to be helping him win his case) seem to be directly borrowed from the clinical description of paranoia. The modulations of the narrative appear to tend in this direction. Sometimes the story unfolds as if K. were its author, that is, as if The Trial were the equivalent of a confession made by a paranoid patient – somewhat comparable in this respect to President Schreber's Memoirs of My Nervous Illness (2000 [1903]). Sometimes, and particularly when it is a matter of emphasizing these paranoid features, the narrator distances himself somewhat from K.'s persona and manifests his discreet presence by phrases such as 'it seemed to him that ...', 'K. believed he saw ...', or 'K. thought she was pretending to ...', rather the way a psychiatrist might describe a case of paranoia on the basis of the patient's confessions.

However, The Trial offers an inverted reflection of this 'typical' portrait of a paranoid individual – typical in that it conforms to the one offered by early twentieth-century psychiatry – that parallels the transformations we have already had occasion to note with respect to crime novels. We have seen that, considered from the lofty vantage point of psychiatry, the paranoid person is above all a protester. Far from accepting the official affirmations and justifications, as normal people do, he keeps pressing his inquiry further and further, thus imperilling the social order. It is precisely this feature that makes him comparable to a social critic, or even a sociologist. Now, K. is neither a protester nor a rebel nor a critic, nor even an analyst trying to unveil with lucidity the hidden dimensions of the society of his time. The idea that there is a hidden reality underneath, and more real than, the apparent reality is entirely foreign to him. K. is, on the contrary, the most normal of normal persons. He is a man of order, entirely satisfied with the existing order. He does not even imagine that any other order can exist. As we have seen, he shows that he is prepared to participate in the inquiry directed against him, and thus to collaborate with the agents of the state who seem to have joined forces to persecute him, provided, however, that he is shown the minimal marks of consideration and respect that he thinks he deserves owing to his social status. He thus has only one desire: that everything go back to the way it was before.

It will be clear by now that *The Trial*, in offering an inverted reflection of crime and/or spy novels and also of paranoia, carries out an *unveiling* of the presuppositions implicitly contained, on

EPILOGUE

the one hand, in a literary genre that was relatively new at the time when Kafka wrote - but with a great future in store - and, on the other hand, in the identification of a mental illness that had made its appearance with a certain furore in the field of psychiatry fifteen years earlier. This operation of unveiling is, on a strictly formal level, more or less comparable to the one that Christianity carries out with respect to the religion-form, according to René Girard, who is led to interpret the evangelical message as the end of the religious. In the sort of eschatological mythology that this author sets up, the religion-form is inseparable from the accusation and persecution of a scapegoat. This figure is found in Christianity in the Passion story. But while in the ancient religions the accused was truly guilty, in the case of Christianity he is truly innocent, and this reversal suffices to unveil the driving mechanisms that underlay – and still underlie – the form of collective effervescence (as Durkheim would have said) that is manifested in religious rituals (Girard 1986 [1982]). However, in the case of *The Trial*, it is plainly a different religion that is unveiled: that of the nation-state, the supposed 'constitutional state', based on respect for law as the guarantor of 'peace', respect for the identity of the citizenry (K. keeps searching feverishly through his identity papers, which in his eyes constitute a sort of justification), and, more generally, support for a regular, predictable reality, whose pitiless character rests on the transformation of 'arbitrariness' into a 'game of necessity' (Arendt 2007 [1946]: 96). In other words, as many exegeses have striven to show, in The Trial we find an unveiling of, and an announcement of the dangers encompassed in, the nationstate, the new avatar of the state-form that was implemented in nineteenth-century Europe and that was already, at the time Kafka's novel was written (the beginning of the First World War) incubating the monstrosities to come.³ What was anticipated in *The Trial* had to come about in reality for the book to become the symbol of a radical change in what can be called the representation of reality in western literature, to borrow the subtitle of the great book Erich Auerbach wrote between 1942 and 1945 in exile in Istanbul where he had found refuge from the Nazi dictatorship (Auerbach 2003 [1946]). Our reality, woven of crimes, mysteries and conspiracies, always threatened by its double, the one that reading crime novels and spy novels – which for us may take the place of an 'evening prayer' if not of Hegel's 'morning prayer' - has accustomed us to consider, as simultaneously abnormal and banal. Murky and yet exciting. Reality itself.

NOTES

PREFACE

- 1 In a study devoted to detective fiction and its readers, Annie Collovald and Erik Neveu show that this editorial realm has continued to expand in France, as measured by the increase in the number of publishers and collections and by the diversification of authors and themes. Detective literature is not popular literature in that it is not aimed primarily at readers of low socioeconomic status. Its readers, recruited from all social classes, are especially numerous among salaried workers, mid-level professionals but also among cadres and members of intellectual professions. See Collovald and Neveu 2004: 59–64 and 336–8.
- 2 On the various uses that history and sociology can make of literature, see Lyon-Caen and Ribard 2010.

CHAPTER I REALITY VERSUS REALITY

- 1 This conception of mystery also applies to scientific mysteries as we have grown accustomed to conceptualizing them, thanks to Thomas Kuhn's analyses (2012 [1962]): that is, as singularities that have appeared in the course of scientific experiments, singularities whose meaning cannot be determined in the framework of any recognized paradigm and that are therefore viewed as 'noise' until their accumulation leads to the development of a new paradigm.
- 2 The term 'attribution' is used here in the sense it has in attribution theory, which was originally constituted in the realm of social psychology before being incorporated into cognitive research. In social psychology, studies dealing with attribution a notion first developed by Fritz Heider and later by Harold Kelley bore initially on the process through which an individual seeks causes of the behaviour of others (see Heider 1958; Kelley 1967; and also Deschamps 1977). This work was later extended by the study of causal inferences in general, those made in the course of daily life by actors who are not scientists. A synthetic history of research on attribution can be found in Malle 2004. Mark Martinko (1995) has applied attribution theory to

organizational analysis. Shortly before his death, Charles Tilly published Why? (2006), a book on the way people explain historical events; his study has turned out to be especially useful for my project. The most comprehensive work on cognitive research devoted to this theme to date, to my knowledge, is Sperber, Premack and Premack 1995.

- 3 On the possibility of extending the analysis of intentional processes to beings that lack consciousness or to non-conscious mechanisms, see Dennett 1987.
- 4 On the formal structure of the detective novel as a narrative that works 'backwards' towards an explanation, see Lits 1999.
- 5 On the picaresque genre, see Pavel 2003: 97–111.
- 6 In three stories published between 1841 and 1844 ('The Murders in the Rue Morgue', 'The Mystery of Marie Roget' and 'The Purloined Letter'), Edgar Allen Poe set up the configuration of features that came to serve as the matrix for detective stories. Among these features, scholars generally note the way the 'point' (to use a term from analytic philosophy) that lies at the heart of the affair narrated shifts away from moral and/or social questions, which had previously been central in crime stories, towards strictly intellectual questions. Crime is no longer envisaged in its transgressive dimension, but rather as a problem to be solved. Another innovation, to which we shall return later on, consists in embodying the inquirer not in a policeman but in an amateur detective. The Chevalier Charles-Auguste Dupin, who is French (like Eugène-François Vidocq, whose memoirs Poe had read), finds the solution to mysteries that his friend Monsieur G., the Prefect of the Paris police, has not managed to solve. Finally, the features attributed to this detective are widely borrowed by later authors and attributed to a large number of other characters. The typical detective is a cultivated man from good society, solitary, eccentric and endowed with exceptional capacities of observation and analysis.
- 7 Doyle first made contact with the spiritualist movement in 1886 and joined the Society for Psychical Research in 1893. He was especially interested in photographs of spirits, or psychographics (see Faivre 2003).
- 8 In 1844, George W. M. Reynolds published *The Mysteries of London* (1996 [1844]), which was highly successful and was immediately rewritten in French (not translated) by Paul Féval under the name Sir Francis Trolopp and published in instalments in Paris (2006 [1844]). Reynolds's book, for its part, was inspired by Eugène Sue's *Les mystères de Paris*, published in instalments in Paris between June 1842 and October 1843 and immediately translated into English for publication in London; Sue's text came out in book form in Paris the following year (Sue 1989 [1844]).
- 9 On the late-eighteenth-century origins of this character, a typical figure in English novels, see Brissenden 1974.
- 10 In an essay on *The New Arabian Nights*, to designate the narrative position adopted by Stevenson, Richard Dury evokes the English term 'camp', which is 'articulated around the idea of a self-conscious off-stage theatricality' from which there emanates 'a powerful feeling of the provisional character of all appearances'. "Camp" and dandyism are similar in the stress they place on representation and style, and on the inessential and constructed personality, and also through the fact that both challenge the orthodox ideology from within (including the distinctions between the sexes)' (Dury 2003: 122).
- 11 Kracauer's text, dedicated to Theodor Adorno, was written between 1922 and 1925 but remained unpublished until 1971.

- 12 Regarding the way the meaning of the word 'society' became detached in the late eighteenth century from its earlier meaning ('good' society) to designate a collective about which one could speak without referring directly to the individuals of which it was composed, see Nisbet 1966.
- 13 For the best-known examples, see Tarde 2004 and Durkheim 2006 [1897].
- 14 There is one well-known exception to this exception, however, which we also owe to Agatha Christie. In 1946, she wrote a story that she locked up in her safe, not to be published until after her death. In this story, which relates Hercule Poirot's final adventure, Poirot is the criminal, although for more or less honourable reasons (he kills a criminal by suggestion, an unchallengeable act from a strictly legal standpoint). One can see this literary exploit that makes the detective a criminal as an example of the transformations aroused by the desire to exploit all possible combinations within a given structural framework; we shall look at these transformations later on (see Bayard 2000 [1998]: 149–58).
- 15 Regarding a particularly salient literary expression of this way of conceiving of a conspiracy, see Philippe Roussin's important book on Louis-Ferdinand Céline (2005).
- 16 On the determination of *the whatness of what is*, and on the semantic role of institutions, see Boltanski 2011 [2009].
- 17 'Notwithstanding different origins and starting times around the world, the history of the modern state can be read as the work of rendering national just about all crucial features of society: authority, identity, territory, security, law and market. Periods preceding those of the ascendancy of the national state saw rather different types of scalings, with territories typically subject to multiple systems of rule rather than to the exclusive authority of a state' (Sassen 2006: 15).
- 18 See especially Foucault 2007 and 2008.
- 19 To my knowledge the most complete analysis of the birth of the idea of sovereignty, particularly in Jean Bodin, is by Olivier Beaud (1994).
- 20 'At the end of the nineteenth century . . . a new function was assigned to the democratic state, that of protecting social rights. . . . On the one hand, it was a *taxonomic* operation aiming to create a "class" (or a "category"), by aligning elements possessing the same properties within a single set. On the other hand, it was an operation of *identification* (or individualization), which aimed to isolate each of the elements belonging to the class considered. . . . The members of these categories shared the same collective identity to the extent that they internalized the power relation in which they were caught up, that is, the self-definition given by those who are mandated by the sovereign authority to oversee the application of the law' (Noiriel 1997: 31). [Translator's note: Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from French source texts are my own.]
- 21 On the historical genesis of the welfare state, see Swaan 1988.
- 22 This is particularly clear in *The Man Who Was Thursday*, to which we shall return in chapter 3.
- 23 On the concept of test, see Boltanski and Thévenot 2006: 40–2. On the use of the notion of test for an analysis of the state, see Linhardt 2001 and 2007.
- 24 The term Bibliothèque bleue refers to a series of inexpensive books printed in Troyes and sold by itinerant peddlers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; see Mandrou 1964 and Bollème 1971.

- 25 As we know, for Claude Lévi-Strauss myths furnished a logical model for unfolding a contradiction and absorbing it, as it were, especially by immersing it in a network of mediations, which triggers recourse to a multiplicity of intermediate categories that intervene between the polar oppositions. See Lévi-Strauss 1981 (especially the 'Finale': 628–9) and, for a very useful commentary, Keck 2005: 136–43.
- 26 As for example when some major scandal, discussed endlessly with indignation in the press, goes to trial only to have all charges dropped (de Blic 2007).
- 27 The tension between the logic of territories and the logic of flows, and the establishment of governmental and ideological arrangements (Saskia Sassen calls them 'assemblages') aiming to abolish that tension (an impossible task), temper it, get around it or deny it, is a permanent feature of the history of political units and especially of European states in the modern era. But it takes exacerbated forms in periods marked both by a rapid expansion of capitalism on a global scale and by nationalist reactions. This was the case in Europe during the period that saw the birth of the spy novel, and it is also the case, it must be noted, in the present time. For a history of the relation between territories and flows and between nation-states and capitalism, see Sassen 2006.
- 28 'Regardless of the private motives of the individual stranger within a group for choosing trade and particularly financial transactions, the first major transactions of modern bankers during the sixteenth century take place abroad. Money is emancipated from the local restrictedness of most teleological sequences, because it is the intermediate link from any given starting point to any given final point' (Simmel 1990: 266).
- 29 In developing the notion of *anomie*, Durkheim placed the primary emphasis on industrial crises and bankruptcies. These pathological phenomena, triggered by abnormal forms of the division of labour, are what require 'regulation' (Durkheim 1984 [1893]: 292–309).
- 30 The Woman in White (2002 [1860]) and The Moonstone (1999 [1868]), two major works by Wilkie Collins that combine the adventure novel with the social novel, play on a form of suspense that is often considered a forerunner of detective fiction.
- 31 The works most clearly oriented towards the novel of espionage were written by these two authors during the First World War: Leblanc, *L'éclat d'obus* (1916) and Leroux, *Rouletabille chez Krupp* (1917). In both cases, the enemy is obviously Germany.
- 32 From the name of Frank Miller's series of comic strips that served as the basis for the film of the same name by Robert Rodriguez and Quentin Tarantino.
- 33 On this metaphor, see Hadot 2004.
- 34 On the history of the metaphor of the *theatrum mundi*, see Christian 1987.
- 35 On the way the question of the clue is raised in the case of microhistory, see Revel 2006.
- 36 For models of analysis of this type, see Adorno (2006 [1949]). To take another example from the history of French poetry, see Roubaud (2000 [1978]).
- 37 On the process through which a popular genre is constituted as a specific field modelled on the genres known as 'noble', see Boltanski 1975a: 38–59.
- 38 On the formation of a field of detective fiction in French-language literature, see Collovald and Neveu 2004: 319–20.

NOTES TO PP. 41-2

CHAPTER 2 THE INQUIRIES OF A LONDON DETECTIVE

- 1 See Eco and Sebeok 1983. In addition to Carlo Ginzburg's article, 'Clues: Morelli, Freud, and Sherlock Holmes' (later published in an expanded version as 'Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm' [Ginzburg 1989 (1979)]), the volume contains several contributions devoted to the analysis of Sherlock Holmes's mode of reasoning as contrasted with modern logic (Jaakko Hintikka) and Peirce's semiology (see especially Sebeok 1983 and Harrowitz 1983).
- 2 Doyle professed great admiration for Poe (see Paul 1991: 25). Still, he intentionally made Sherlock Holmes an even more powerful detective than Poe's Dupin. During a conversation with Dr Watson, for example, Holmes makes a reference to Dupin that marks the superiority of his own method over that of his predecessor (*A Study in Scarlet*: 24).
- 3 Although I have dipped into Doyle's writings fairly often over the last thirty years or so, I would have had trouble dredging up from memory the details I needed for this chapter without Lucien-Jean Bord's invaluable *Dictionnaire Sherlock Holmes* (Bord 2008). All the characters mentioned in Dr Watson's narratives are listed in this dictionary by name, along with a brief description, whenever Doyle supplies sufficient information. I have also benefited from Richard Lancelyn Green's excellent introduction to *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (Doyle 1993). [Translator's note: all citations from the Sherlock Holmes stories are from *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* (New York: Doubleday, 1930).]
- 4 The most recent, to my knowledge, is *The Italian Secretary: A Further Adventure of Sherlock Holmes* (Carr 2005).
- 5 Some of the films inspired by Doyle's stories transpose the Sherlock Holmes figure to periods and historical contexts that the detective could not have known, thus conferring on Holmes the atemporal character of a mythological hero. This is the case of Roy Williams's *Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon*, produced in 1942–3, the object of a meticulous and erudite analysis by Jean-Pierre Naugrette (2005). In this film, freely inspired by Doyle's short story 'The Adventure of the Dancing Men', 'Holmes and Watson are directly implicated in the worldwide conflict currently under way' (Naugrette 2005: 125).
- 6 Analysing the numerous figures of monsters generated by late-nineteenth-century English literature (Dracula, the mad doctor of *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, the hero of *The Portrait of Dorian Gray* and so on), Roger Bozzetto remarks that 'all the monstrous heroes seem to have one thing in common: they present themselves in two guises' (2003: 141). In this narrative formation, an irreproachable person dissimulates his monstrous double, who 'never speaks' and is thus speech being associated with humanity a pure monster.
- 7 Some examples: Sir Charles Baskerville, heir to the Baskerville lands and name (*The Hound of the Baskervilles*); The Duke of Holdernesse, a very wealthy British aristocrat described as 'a tall and stately person, scrupulously dressed' ('The Adventure of the Priory School': 543); Lady Frances Carfax, the last surviving descendant of the Counts of Rufton ('The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax'); Lord Blackwater, a racehorse owner in Dartmoor ('Silver Blaze'); Lord Bellinger, who calls on Sherlock Holmes for help

- following the disappearance of a document crucial to the foreign policy of Great Britain ('The Adventure of the Second Stain'); the list could go on and on. According to Lucien-Jean Bord's index (Bord 2008), more than a hundred masters are featured in the Sherlock Holmes stories.
- 8 A mid-nineteenth-century jurist, Raymond-Théodore Troplang, defined the servant class as follows: 'The servant class . . . destined for social wretchedness is in the free states the class most reminiscent of slavery. It corresponds to a need that servitude is charged with satisfying among peoples where slavery is established. It is the lowest rank of society; for of all conditions, it is the one that implies the least independence and industry' (quoted in Xifaras 2004: 68).
- 9 The number of domestic servants remained considerable throughout the nineteenth century. Peter Laslett calculates that in Western Europe around 40 per cent of all children became servants during their adolescence (1977: 43).
- 10 Here, too, there is no shortage of examples. Bord's index features 62 servants and household employees. House-cleaners and chambermaids, often of peasant origin, are particularly slow-witted, dishonest, and of dubious sexual mores (Agatha, Charles Milverton's maid, seduced by Sherlock Holmes, who disguises himself as a plumber in order to get information from her, in 'The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton'; Catherine Cusak, Countess Morcar's thieving chambermaid in 'The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle'; the 'highly coloured' and 'impudent' Carrie Evans, chambermaid of Lady Beatrice Falder in 'The Adventure of Shoscombe Old Place' [1109], and many others). Innkeepers and coachmen stand out in particular for their crudeness and brutality (for example, Reuben Hayes, innkeeper and former coachman of the Duke of Holdernesse, who murdered Professor Heidegger in 'The Adventure of the Priory School'; Toller, the Rucastles' groom, presented as a 'rough, uncouth man, with . . . a perpetual smell of drink' in 'The Adventure of the Copper Beeches' [324]; or John Cobb, a groom in Charles McCarthy's stables in 'The Boscombe Valley Mystery').
- 11 They act as stewards or major-domos, for instance; Richard Brunton, Reginald Musgrave's major-domo at Harlstone ('The Musgrave Ritual'), is a case in point.
- 12 There are many of these: for example, John Barrymore, Sir Charles Baskerville's butler (*The Hound of the Baskervilles*), or Ames, John Douglas's 'prim, respectable, and capable' butler at Birlstone (*The Valley of Fear*: 781). Mrs Dixon, Mr Carruthers's governess at Chiltern Grange, is 'a very respectable elderly person' ('The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist': 528).
- 13 I thank Ève Chiapello, who drew my attention to the distinction between following a rule and pursuing an objective, a distinction that plays an especially important role in theories of management control. On this distinction, see the various modalities of planned action as analysed in Thévenot 2006.
- 14 On the secrecy surrounding state action, especially in the realm of international relations, and on the autonomy available to diplomats with respect to ordinary rules, including those that are presumed to govern the workings of the state, owing in particular to the fluctuating character of the goals they pursue, see Mann 1988: 151–3.
- 15 Some specimens: John Douglas, who made his fortune in the gold mines of California, owner of Birlstone Manor; he has 'a strong-jawed, rugged

NOTES TO PP. 46-7

face' and gives the impression 'that he had seen life in social strata on some far lower horizon than the county society of Sussex' (*The Valley of Fear*: 780); Josiah Amberley, a retired paint manufacturer with a 'fierce, eager expression' ('The Adventure of the Retired Colourman': 1114); Sir Eustace Brackenstall, 'one of the richest men of Kent', but a brute and a 'confirmed drunkard' ('The Adventure of the Abbey Grange': 637–8); Tito Castalotte, a North American businessman, the senior partner of the New York importexport firm Castalotte and Zamba, and member of the Red Circle, a secret Neapolitan society with ties to the old Carbonari ('The Adventure of the Red Circle').

- 16 They may be spies (like von Bork and Baron von Herling, in 'His Last Bow'), or swindlers and criminals (like Count Negretto in 'The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone'), or revolutionaries and anarchists, or members of secret societies (like the anarchist Klopman, in 'His Last Bow', the couple Gennaro and Emilia Lucca in 'The Adventure of the Red Circle', or Pietro Venucci in 'The Adventure of the Six Napoleons'). In Holmes's geopolitics, foreign countries, especially those of continental Europe but also Russia and South America, are presented as places riddled through and through with revolutionary forces whose leaders are bloodthirsty criminals. The duty of good Englishmen is thus to protect Great Britain, a space where order reigns, against the risks of contamination by outside agents (see, for example, the press clippings cited at the beginning of chapter 6 in A Study in Scarlet). This opposition between liberal England, whose reasonable population is governed in a rational manner, and foreign countries, especially in the South, that are prey to violence, passion and revolutionary outbursts, is a commonplace of Victorian literature (see Klingopulos 1982: 24–5).
- 17 For example, Isadora Klein, a 'celebrated beauty' but an adventuress of Spanish origin, engaged to the Duke of Lomond ('The Three Gables': 1031); Mme Fournaye, Creole by birth, who stabbed her husband in a jealous rage ('The Second Stain'); and the unhappy wife of Robert Ferguson, whom he brought back from Peru and who, endowed with a fiery temperament, is accused wrongly, moreover of vampirizing her own child ('The Sussex Vampire').
- 18 The ⁵Signe de piste' (Trail Sign) collection and Serge Dallens's Prince Eric stories (1930s–1950s) constitute a somewhat later French equivalent with fascist overtones.
- 19 That policemen are commoners can often be read on their faces. Let us take Anderson and Bardle, policemen of the town of Fulworth, as examples. The former is 'a big, ginger-moustached man of the slow, solid Sussex breed a breed which covers much good sense under a heavy, silent exterior' (1085). The latter is 'a steady, solid, bovine man' ('The Adventure of the Lion's Mane': 1090). Baynes, an inspector from the Surrey police who intervenes in the Wisteria Lodge affair, is 'a stout, puffy, red man whose face was only redeemed from grossness by two extraordinarily bright eyes, almost hidden behind the heavy creases of cheek and brow' ('The Adventure of Wisteria Lodge': 873).
- 20 Professor Moriarty is 'a man who cannot afford to fail, one whose whole unique position depends on the fact that all he does must succeed'. He puts his 'great brain and a huge organisation' at the service of this success (*The Valley of Fear*: 866).

- 21 'I am the only one in the world', Sherlock Holmes says of himself (*The Sign of Four*: 90).
- 22 Some specimens: Baron Aldebert Gruner, an international adventurer, swindler and murderer; he is also a great collector of Chinese porcelain and a recognized expert in the field ('The Adventure of the Illustrious Client'). Sergius Coram is a scholar of Russian origin who is preparing a major work on the Coptic manuscripts of Syria and Egypt. A revolutionary, he fled Russia after selling out his companions and settled in England under a false name ('The Adventure of the Golden Pince-Nez'). John Clay, murderer, burglar, thief and forger, is the descendant of a duke of royal blood and was educated at Eton and Oxford. He is one of the most dangerous men in Great Britain ('The Red-headed League'). Colonel Sebastian Moran, a big-game hunter, is Moriarty's second-in-command ('The Adventure of the Empty House'). We also find Charles Augustus Milverton, the repugnant master singer and socialite ('The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton'), and the anarchist Klopman, who tries to assassinate Count Von und Zu Grafenstein ('His Last Bow').
- 23 Numerous mysteries are initially attributed to supernatural phenomena by the witnesses who call for the services of Sherlock Holmes. The best-known example is found in the hound of the Baskervilles, evoked in the previous chapter; its victims believe, on the strength of a book of magic spells, that an ancestral curse weighs on the noble family. But many other instances can be cited. Thus Mr Robert Ferguson thinks at first that the wounds marking the neck of his one-year-old son were caused by a vampire, a hypothesis that the detective deems absurd and whose foolishness he demonstrates ('The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire'). As we have already seen, Doyle, who died in 1930, converted to spiritualism at around age thirty and became an ardent advocate. However, this interest in spirits and the paranormal developed without any consequences for the Sherlock Holmes stories; the author continued to produce these narratives as if the two universes were structurally incompatible.
- 24 On the 'continuist conception of reality', which made it possible to link the 'material world' with the 'moral world' in the classic detective fiction, see L'Heuillet 2001: 317–20.
- 25 Laurent Jaffro has maintained that the argument of common sense had a reactive character, owing to the fact that it was developed primarily in order to restore threatened moral positions. It has thus often been evoked to counter theoretical conceptions that opened the door to critiques by way of scepticism and relativism, especially critiques of Cartesian approaches, in the case of the Scottish Enlightenment (see Jaffro 2004).
- 26 Sherlock Holmes wrote a monograph on the subject, as well as on the different types of footprints and on the influence of one's trade on the shape of one's hands (*The Sign of Four*).
- 27 Especially through visits to the British Museum, where he is in the habit of seeking documentation (see, for example, 'The Adventure of Wisteria Lodge').
- 28 Doyle began his career by practising medicine. According to historians of the detective novel, it was Dr Joseph Bell, Doyle's professor when he was studying medicine at Edinburgh Hospital, who served as his model when he sketched out the exceptional powers of observation from which Holmes

NOTES TO PP. 51-4

- benefits (see Kestner 2000: 16). It was no doubt in order to emphasize the value of the *clinical gaze* that Doyle did not make much room in his stories for the scientific methods being developed in police work during the same period (see Symons 1994: 23).
- 29 According to exegetes of Doyle's work, this pronouncement is apocryphal. It does not appear in any of Doyle's texts. It has nevertheless taken on paradigmatic value as a summary of the detective's method (see Oudin 1997: 29).
- 30 On the ordinary sense of normality (the term 'normality' as used here designates the opposite of insanity), see Boltanski 2012. This theme will be analysed at greater length in chapter 5.
- 31 One example among others: Trevor Bennett, a young academic, is an assistant to the eminent and wealthy Professor Presbury, who teaches physiology at the University of Camford (a contraction of Cambridge and Oxford); Bennett is engaged to marry the professor's only daughter. Bennett attributes his future father-in-law's behaviour, which has become quite odd at times (he occasionally crawls around on all fours), to intermittent attacks of madness. Sherlock Holmes solves the mystery by revealing the underlying reasons for these odd behaviours; that is, he explains them rationally ('The Adventure of the Creeping Man').
- 32 Translator's note: unless otherwise indicated, the term 'liberal' is used in this book in the traditional European sense to refer to a political context favourable to individual rights and freedoms, rather than in the more recent American sense of favourable to 'civil liberties, democratic reforms, and the use of government policies to promote social progress' (*American Heritage Dictionary*). For a more detailed look at the characteristics of a liberal political order as depicted in the Sherlock Holmes stories, see chapter 3, especially 146–54.
- 33 Sherlock Holmes published two brief monographs on the anthropometric peculiarities of the human ear, in the *Anthropological Journal* (see 'The Adventure of the Cardboard Box'). Although he himself relies very little on scientific police methods, he professes great admiration for Alphonse Bertillon, who founded the first laboratory of police science in 1870 and invented the anthropometrics for identifying persons considered by the police as recidivists or even simply as potential criminals.
- 34 The opposition between the policeman's apprehension of suspects from the lower servant orders on the basis of biotypological markers on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the detective's grasp of the subtle inner workings of the minds of masters, which he penetrates owing to his sociological perspicacity, can be compared to Michel Foucault's distinction between the sociotechnological interventions that determine the arrangements of lower-class sexuality and the psycho-technological interpretations that ensure the sexual regulation of members of the bourgeoisie within the framework of the family (see Basaure 2008–9).
- 35 In the sense in which the term 'worthy' is used in Boltanski and Thévenot, On Justification (2006): a worthy person is one who embodies most completely a certain order of worth proper to a 'polity'. But, in order to realize this worth, he or she must manifest in a single gesture the capacity to shift into different orders of worth; this capacity constitutes an important property of beings that are truly human.
- 36 For examples from anthropology, see Testart 2004b, especially chapter 2, 'Les hommes du roi': 45–80.

- 37 This is the case for Bannister, the personal valet of Mr Hilton Soames at the College of St Luke. Soames does not know that his valet was formerly in the service of Sir Jabez Gilchrist, a ruined aristocrat whose son is studying at the College of St Luke. Bannister witnesses a scene in which this student steals the examination topics so he can win the Fortescue Scholarship; his dilemma thus takes the form of a conflict between loyalty to his former master and loyalty to his new one ('The Adventure of the Three Students').
- 38 Carlo Ginzburg, in the text he devoted to the paradigm of clues, stresses the formal analogies between Sherlock Holmes's mode of reasoning and the analytic procedures invented by Freud (Ginzburg 1989 [1979]).
- 39 In 1955, Jacques Lacan devoted a now-celebrated seminar to a reading of Poe's 'The Purloined Letter' (Lacan 1972 [1956]).
- 40 I thank Gabriel Bergounioux for drawing my attention to the properly linguistic dimensions of the detective's work.
- 41 The identification of revolutionaries with criminals can be seen most clearly in *The Valley of Fear*. The miners and metalworkers who belong to Lodge 341 in Vermissa are at once members of an initiatory secret society, union organizers struggling against management, anarchists determined to destroy the social order and hardened criminals. The agent (Birdy Edwards, alias John Douglas, alias John McMurdo) who manages to infiltrate their group and who will have their leaders hanged before he himself falls victim to Moriarty's blows (the lodge members had established an alliance with Moriarty) works for the Pinkerton agency. This entity, which operated not only in Doyle's stories but in reality during the same period, was a security agency at the service of the big capitalist firms, specialized in infiltrating unions and physically eliminating their leaders along with the leaders of revolutionary groups. Management also called on this agency to break strikes. (On the origins and operations of the Pinkerton agency, see Kalifa 2007: 105–11.)
- 42 When his mind is not entirely occupied with solving a new mystery, Sherlock Holmes needs cocaine injections three times a day. His forearm is spotted with countless needle marks and scars (*The Sign of Four*).
- 43 On the structure and history of the affair form, see Boltanski et al. 2007.
- 44 Information about these two affairs spread rapidly throughout Enlightenment Europe; David Hume, for example, took sides in the Callas affair.
- 45 On the role of *libelles* as instruments for transforming a 'private story' into a 'public affair' and, consequently, as means of political mobilization in the second half of the eighteenth century, see Maza 1993.
- 46 In 1979, an English Holmesian, Michael Hardwick, published a work of fiction in which he imagined the detective exonerating Captain Dreyfus. This implausible hypothesis attests to the critical comeback that detective stories underwent starting in the 1970s (we shall come back to this point).
- 47 Violence is inherent in the very fact of public accusation, and even the operation that consists in presenting excuses always presupposes, at least implicitly, the existence of a prior accusation (see Austin 1979 [1956]). Sébastien McEvoy (1995) thus recalls that an accusation is both the announcement of a punishment and its justification.
- 48 'For law-preserving violence is a threatening violence. And its threat is not intended as the deterrent that uninformed legal theorists interpret it to be. A deterrent in the exact sense would require a certainty that contradicts the

NOTES TO PP. 60-1

- nature of a threat and is not attained by any law, since there is always hope of eluding its arm. This makes it all the more threatening, like fate, on which depends whether the criminal is apprehended' (Benjamin 1986 [1920/1]: 285).
- 49 As we see from the La Barre affair, it often happens that a case is transformed into a public affair when a specific form of judicial inquisition and inculpation is shifted into a context involving actors who, owing to their social properties, are not 'good examples' (in the sense in which theorists of categorization use the term) of the type of person generally subject to this treatment. Even if, strictly from the standpoint of the police, every individual is by definition a potential suspect, the fact remains that the actors are tacitly arranged in a hierarchy, in the public eye, in what can be called a *space of suspicion*. Thus, it is not so much specific elements that introduce uncertainty at the start of an affair as the fact that the persons accused seem relatively irreproachable except for the crimes attributed to them. In this sense, the affair relies first of all on a common sense of reality. But through its own dynamics the affair helps transform, or at least unsettle, this shared sense, by bringing up examples that are not in harmony with the tacit or explicit definitions that frame it (especially those embedded in law).
- 50 On the role played by affairs in the mobilizations that led to the legalization of abortion, see Boltanski 2013: 160–4.
- 51 The Humbert affair may come to mind: it concerned a mother who gave her paraplegic son a lethal injection, allegedly at his request. This affair played an important role in mobilizations in favour of legalizing euthanasia in France (see Leguay, Caillavet and Humbert 2005).
- 52 On the relation between affairs and scandals, see especially Lemieux 2007.
- 53 As Jean-Louis Flandrin writes: 'One would also place *scandal* among the sentiments characteristic of hierarchical relationships, for it was never an inferior who scandalised his superior but always the latter who scandalised the former.... In fact,... the inferior... had no power to correct his superiors' (Flandrin 1979 [1976]: 148).
- 54 The scandals Sherlock Holmes has to contend with are innumerable. They may concern state business, as in the story of stolen plans for a secret future submarine ('The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans'), or they may involve the honour of highly placed persons, as in the case of the broken engagement that master singer Milverton uses as a threat ('The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton'). The most famous of these scandals has as its heroine Irene Adler, a singer who was once the mistress of Wilhelm von Ormstein, King of Bohemia, and who has letters and a photograph in her possession that could destroy the latter's marriage ('A Scandal in Bohemia'). As this example shows, the scandals in question are most often situated at a point where it is impossible to distinguish between the life of the state and the private lives of members of high society, that is, in spheres where the difference between the private and the public is abolished. Thus in the story of a stolen naval treaty, an affair of state, the young Foreign Office employee Percy Phelps, Lord Holdhurst's nephew, is placed in a difficult situation through the fault of his future brother-in-law, Joseph Harrison, an individual 'without scruples', in debt in the wake of dubious financial operations, and someone 'ready to do anything' to get money ('The Naval Treaty': 467).

- 55 On the model of the journalist as investigator and the development of *faits divers* around 1900 in France, see Kalifa 1995.
- 56 Kate Summerscale sees in the 'Road Hill House affair' an event that supplied the classic English detective novel with a number of ingredients. This mysterious crime – the murder of a young child in a very honourable family whose many members cohabited, surrounded by large numbers of servants, in a huge dwelling – created quite a stir in the 1860s and 1870s. Summerscale remarks that the crime was the occasion for a double incursion on the part of public authorities into a master's house, of which the most private and personal aspects were at once investigated by the craftiest of detectives and delivered up to public opinion by a press avid for scandal. The mystery proved to be particularly difficult in this case, and even increasingly impenetrable as the investigators went deeper and deeper into the accumulation of apparently random details that were transformed into facts by the importance that was attributed to them, facts that the press then seized upon to relaunch the affair endlessly by proposing new interpretations. All these operations clearly had the effect of dragging the most sordid secrets into the open. But Summerscale neglects the essential differences that distinguish this brief news item from fictional mysteries. The differences do not lie solely in the fact that, as she herself points out, the Road Hill House affair has a more violent and more transgressive aspect on the familial and sexual levels than is generally the case in mystery stories, whose authors eliminate the most off-colour details, the very ones the press would take pleasure in reporting, because they were presumed to be real, so that by reporting them the press would presumably be doing nothing but assuming its duty to be independent. But in the case of fictional stories, the reference to such scandalous acts would no longer allow for a justification of the detective's role in re-establishing social order. It is thus at the level of narrative structure that the differences become manifest, for Sherlock Holmes's interventions most often aim precisely at warding off the risk that the affairs of honourable families and personalities might fall into the public domain, provided of course that their responsibility is excusable on the moral level in these affairs (see Summerscale 2008).
- 57 This is the case with James Wilder, private secretary to the Duke of Holdernesse but in reality the duke's illegitimate son, who tries to have his half-brother Lord Saltire kidnapped ('The Adventure of the Priory School').
- 58 This figure of course constitutes a stereotype in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English (for the eighteenth century, see Brissenden 1974; for the nineteenth, see Kaplan 1987). In the Holmesian corpus, Grace Dunbar is a fairly good example. A governess described as 'a brunette, tall, with a noble figure and commanding presence' ('The Problem of Thor Bridge': 1065), she is courted by the husband of the woman she serves, and accused of assassinating that woman. Sherlock Holmes succeeds in exonerating her. Another example is Kitty Winter, a young woman dishonoured by Baron Gruner; she helps Sherlock Holmes and takes her revenge by heaping vitriol on the baron ('The Adventure of the Illustrious Client').
- 59 The Boer Wars (mentioned in 'The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier') could serve this purpose. In 1899, while the Boer Wars were under way, Doyle went to South Africa to supervise the building of a hospital. When he returned, he wrote a book in defence of the British action there: *The War in South Africa: Its Cause and Conduct* (1902).

NOTES TO PP. 65-9

- 60 On the development of the theme of 'insecurity' in the first half of the nineteenth century, or the crime rate as a major social problem associated with urbanization and the multiplication of 'proletarized migrants piled up in the suburbs or the poorest inner city neighbourhoods', see Kalifa 2005, especially 316–22.
- 61 On the social history of techniques of control, see Beniger 1986.
- 62 For a similar perspective, see Desrosières 1993.
- 63 The tension between the statistical approach and the identification of individuals is quite perceptible in Doyle's work. Let us take, for example, this dialogue between Watson and Holmes from *The Sign of Four*:

'See how the folk swarm over yonder in the gaslight.'

'They are coming from work in the yard.'

'Dirty-looking rascals, but I suppose every one has some little immortal spark concealed about him. You would not think it, to look at them. There is no *a priori* probability about it. A strange enigma is man!'

'Someone calls him a soul concealed in an animal,' I suggested.

'Winwood Reade is good upon the subject,' said Holmes. 'He remarks that, while the individual man is an insoluble puzzle, in the aggregate he becomes a mathematical certainty. You can, for example, never fore-tell what any one man will do, but you can say with precision what an average number will be up to. Individuals vary, but percentages remain constant. So says the statistician.' (Doyle 1930: 137)

- 64 On the history of the articulation between the change in modes of administrative population management and the invention of new police measures at the end of the Old Regime and under the French Revolution, see Napoli 2003. On the role of statistical technologies in the establishment of new forms of governance, see Didier 2009.
- 65 The republican conception of the state was initially established to counter personal dependency. This is particularly clear in Rousseau's case. The central and almost obsessional character of Rousseau's horror of all forms of personal dependency is obvious in any number of passages in the *Confessions*, where he relates the injustices of reciprocity and trust from which he suffered in his relations with the nobility (and especially with socially prominent female protectors), as well as in the polemic that opposes him to Hume (in which Rousseau seemingly undermines his own cause; see Lilti 2007). In this light, nothing prevents us from seeing *The Social Contract* as, above all, an attempt to conceptualize a political order from which personal dependency would be banished. Considered in this light, *The Social Contract* would be the political solution to Rousseau's existential situation (see Starobinski 1988 [1971]).
- 66 The changes introduced into self-presentation in the various situations of daily life in modern societies constitute one of the principal mechanisms presented in Erving Goffman's work; see especially Goffman 1959.
- 67 For the 1930s and 1940s, the primary references are of course the American noir novelists Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler and perhaps especially, a little later, Chester Himes, an Afro-American who had spent seven years in prison in his youth for armed robbery and was well placed to describe the corruption of the police and of American society in his day. As for French crime fiction in the years following May '68, the most representative author

NOTES TO PP. 69-75

is unquestionably Jean-Patrick Manchette, a writer from the extreme left who imported into crime fiction the debates of the early 1970s over the legitimacy of political violence. For example, in *Nada* (1972), he evokes the kidnapping of the US ambassador to Paris and the repression that rains down on the members of the group who carried out that operation (see Baudou and Schleret 2001).

- 68 On the critical dimensions of the contemporary French crime novel, see Müller and Ruoff 2002.
- 69 Analysing the relations between Sherlock Holmes and the holders of power in Great Britain, Jean-Pierre Naugrette writes: 'As if, in a fine reversal, not content to work for the Foreign Office, he [Sherlock Holmes] were the Foreign Office in person, just as Mycroft, his brilliant brother who works at Whitehall, having made himself indispensable to the government on the strength of his brain, which functions like a computer before its time, becomes the British government all on his own' (Naugrette 2006: 68). This narrative set-up, which brings the figure of the double into play, is already present in Edgar Allan Poe's work. Relying on a rigorous analysis of Poe's The Purloined Letter, Jean-Claude Milner offers serious arguments supporting the suggestion that Dupin (who is known to belong to an 'illustrious family') is the minister's younger brother. Thus, we would find, in different forms, the same structure in Poe and in Doyle (see Milner 1985; I thank Gabriel Bergounioux for pointing this text out to me).

CHAPTER 3 THE INQUIRIES OF A PARIS POLICEMAN

- 1 Doyle read Gaboriau's work, which had been translated into English quite rapidly and was highly successful in Great Britain. Moreover, Sherlock Holmes makes a dismissive reference to Émile Gaboriau and the policeman he features, Lecoq, at the beginning of *A Study in Scarlet* (25). On Doyle's debt to Gaboriau, see the introduction by Richard Lancelyn Green to *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (Doyle 1993).
- 2 The first novel published under Simenon's name featuring the Commissioner came out in 1931, but Simenon specialists assign earlier origins to Maigret. Several characters that appear in Simenon's 'popular novels', published under various pseudonyms, present features that come together in the figure of Maigret (see Lacassin 1992). [Translator's note: In this book, where a Maigret novel is mentioned but not cited, the title of the published English translation will be followed by a parenthetical indication of the French title and date of first publication; a novel that is cited will be followed by a standard author-date reference. For indexes to all French and English titles, see http://www.trussel.com/maig/maig.htm#T3.]
- 3 Eugène Sue, from a well-to-do family himself, was a dandy in his youth; he converted to socialism and became a socialist deputy in Paris under the Second Republic. He completed his most politically engaged novel, *Les mystères du peuple*, in 1857; it was censored by the Second Empire, which confiscated and destroyed the entire print run.
- 4 The category of the 'picturesque' came out of the aesthetic reflection of the late eighteenth century. It pertained to objects that were neither 'beautiful' nor 'sublime' but that could nevertheless give aesthetic pleasure, as it were,

NOTES TO PP. 76-81

- to persons of taste and feeling, despite, or even because of, their ugliness and their triviality. It was thus applied to the description of the lower classes, grasped in their most wretched or transgressive aspects (see Hussey 1983 [1927]; for a commentary on the social uses of this aesthetic category, see Boltanski 1999 [1993]).
- 5 In this respect, Gaboriau is often compared to Wilkie Collins, who combined family intrigues with police mysteries, especially in *The Woman in White* (2002 [1860]).
- 6 Eugène-François Vidocq, the son of a baker, joined the Revolutionary army at age sixteen and was dismissed two years later, in 1793. Having become a thief and a swindler, he was condemned to forced labour. He escaped from prison in Brest, was re-arrested, sent to prison in Toulon and escaped once again. Under the Empire, he became a police informer; the chief of police later put him at the head of a national police brigade made up of 'reformed' delinquents. This brigade became the principal 'criminal' police force in Paris under the Restoration. Dismissed a first time in 1827, Vidocq was called back at the beginning of the Iuly Monarchy to put down the republican insurrection of 1832. Then the prefect Gisquet, the chief of police, intending to make his services more respectable administratively, undertook a thorough housecleaning and excluded Vidocq for good. Vidocq then founded the first private police agency: the Bureau de renseignements universels dans l'intérêt du commerce (Bureau of universal information in the interest of trade). Vidocq published his memoirs in 1828; they met with great success and immediately gave rise to a great stream of literary criticism that continues to this day. The lasting fascination with Vidocq has to do with the position he occupied at the point of convergence between the lower classes and high society, the Revolution and its aftermath, the slums and the state, the political police and the criminal police. It also has to do with the way he managed to profit – as did a number of his contemporaries – from the various political regimes for which he did the dirty work (see especially Kalifa 2007: 22–30). According to François Rivière, in his preface to the re-edition of Gaboriau's first courtroom novel, L'affaire Lerouge (2004 [1866]), the author was also inspired by the memoirs of the chief of the national police, Canler, who succeeded Vidocq (Canler 1862). Published five years after Vidocq's death, Canler's Mémoires were very critical of his predecessor but, by giving credence to rumours, they helped establish Vidocq's legend.
- 7 Vautrin is a former prisoner condemned to forced labour who escapes from prison in Toulon and again in Rochefort. He hides his true identity behind various pseudonyms and from one novel to another he pursues his criminal activities before becoming a spy for the police and then a policeman himself.
- 8 Javert is not actually a former criminal, but he comes from the world of crime because he was born in prison, the son of a bohemian woman whose husband was serving in the galleys. Javert served in the galleys himself in his youth before becoming, at age forty, a police inspector in Montreuil-sur-Mer.
- 9 On the administrative work of homogenizing national spaces, see Didier 2009.
- 10 On this general topic, see Thuillier 1980, Thuillier and Tulard 1994 and, on the role played by the administration in France in the formation of representations of the state, Catherine and Thuillier 1982.
- 11 These remarks converge with the results of Alexis Spire's study of government

NOTES TO PP. 86-93

- employees charged with the dossiers of foreigners at the Prefecture of Police in Paris; see Spire 2005 and 2008.
- 12 On the importance attributed to social classes in the Maigret novels, see Dubois 1992: 174–7.
- 13 This is the case, for example, for Inspector Janvier, who is shot and seriously wounded in *Maigret Takes a Room* (Simenon 1960 [1951]).
- 14 On the notion of 'police measure', see Napoli 2009.
- 15 In his biography of Simenon, Pierre Assouline refers to Maigret's Dead Man (Maigret et son mort, 1947) only to stress Simenon's resentment against financiers. In this novel, indeed, Jean Bronsky, the leader of the Czech gang, is a financier. But Assouline does not pick up on the Iewish consonance of the family name, any more than he does with the other 'financiers' who appear in a less than flattering light in other novels (Art Levinson in *Maigret and the* Millionaires [Maigret voyage, 1958]; Weill in The Heart of a Man (Les volets verts, 1950); Élie Wermster in Emile in Brussels [Émile à Bruxelles, 1943]). Simenon's anti-Semitism is a problem for his biographers. When he was quite young, in 1921, Simenon wrote a series of violently anti-Semitic articles in La Gazette de Liège that seem to have been inspired by the Protocols of the Elders of Zion (a forgery to which we shall return in chapter 4). But it is hard to know whether these articles expressed something like a 'conviction' or whether they had a purely opportunistic character. Similarly, during the Occupation, Simenon was not an active Vichy supporter, although the suspicions directed towards him after the Liberation played a role in his exile in the United States. He was most likely simply an anti-Semite and a Vichy supporter in a passive and quite ordinary way, permeated by the dominant ideas of his time (see Assouline 1996: 63–70, 243, 360, 480–7).
- 16 Biographical details about Maigret are presented in particular in *The Saint-Fiacre Affair* (Simenon 1942 [1932]) and *Maigret's Memoirs* (Simenon 1963 [1951]).
- 17 On the very important role played by the fight against epidemics in the genesis of the concerns that led to the welfare state, see Swaan 1988.
- 18 See especially A Man's Head (Simenon 2003 [1931]) and Maigret in Court (Simenon 1961 [1960]).
- 19 On this point, see the analyses in Corcuff and Fleury 2001. The authors cite a particularly explicit passage in which Simenon describes the way Maigret looks at the judge in charge of the investigation, Coméliau, in Maigret Has Doubts: '... if Coméliau had always distrusted the Inspector and his methods, it was due . . . to the gulf separating their points of view. It all came down to the question of social classes. The Magistrate had remained a man of an unchanging background in a changing world. His grandfather had presided over the highest Courts of Appeal, in Paris, and his father still sat on the Council of State, while one of his uncles was French Ambassador in Helsinki. He himself had studied economics to enter the Superintendance of Finance, and it was only after failing the examination that he had taken up the law. He was the typical product of his society, the slave of its ways, its rules of conduct, even its language. One would have thought that his daily experiences in the Palais de Justice would have affected his concepts of human nature, but that was not so; he was invariably influenced by the point of view held by his class' (Simenon 1982 [1959]: 96).
- 20 Thus Jacques Dubois speaks of Simenon's 'determinism': 'The individual is

NOTES TO PP. 93-8

- "determined": he is the product of a milieu and a history' (Dubois 2000: 320).
- 21 This is the case, for example, with the numerous early novels situated in ports, places that foster the reconstitution of 'atmospheres' enshrouded in fog, and thus propitious for the dissimulation of sordid secrets: The Yellow Dog (Le chien jaune, 1931), Concarneau; A Crime in Holland (Un crime en Hollande, 1931), Delfzijl; The Sailors' Rendezvous (Au rendez-vous des terre-neuves, 1931), Fécamp; Death of a Harbour Master (Le port des brumes, 1932), Ouistreham. Descriptions of places also play a major role in the post-war novels, for example Maigret in New York (Maigret à New York, 1947) or Maigret in Vichy (Maigret à Vichy, 1968). Many novels depict districts in Paris, especially the 11th arrondissement, where Maigret lives, but also most of the other central districts of the capital, for example Montparnasse in A Man's Head (La tête d'un homme, 1931) or Montmartre in Maigret Sets a Trap (Maigret tend un piège, 1955), and also the districts that border the Seine, such as the Île Saint-Louis or, of course, l'Île de la Cité (the procedure that consists in setting a crime story in a specific district is used systematically by Léo Malet in Les nouveaux mystères de Paris, 1954–9). The list of stories in which Maigret's treks across Paris are described in detail, as for example in Maigret's Little Joke (Maigret s'amuse, 1957), would be endless. An index of the geographic regions in which Simenon's novels take place can be found in Lemoine 2003: 130-3.
- 22 Four novels, for example, are set in the milieu of lock-keepers, boatmen, barges, rivers and canals: The Crime at Lock 14 (Le charretier de La Providence, 1931); Guinguette by the Seine (La guinguette à deux sous, 1932); The Lock at Charenton (L'écluse no 1, 1933); Maigrette and the Bum (Maigret et le clochard, 1963); other stories are set in the world of the cinema, such as Maigret's Pickpocket (Le voleur de Maigret, 1967), in the wings of a major hotel, such as Maigret and the Hotel Majestic (Les caves du Majestic, in Maigret revient, 1942), or in the business world, such as Maigret and the Reluctant Witnesses (Maigret et les témoins récalcitrants, 1959).
- 23 See especially At the 'Gai-Moulin' (La danseuse du Gai-moulin, 1931), Maigret in Montmartre (Maigret au Picratt's, 1950), The Patience of Maigret (La patience de Maigret, 1965), or Maigret and the Informer (Maigret et l'indicateur, 1971).
- 24 As in Guinguette by the Seine (La guinguette à deux sous, 1932) or Maigret Takes a Room (Maigret en meublé, 1951).
- 25 'And if my characters fail, it's because man fails, inevitably. He fails consciously or unconsciously. This is even, in my eyes, the only drama' (Georges Simenon, letter to André Gide, 29 March 1948, cited in Lemoine 2003: 117).
- 26 For a list of Mme Maigret's dishes and her recipes, see Courtine 1974.
- 27 In Maigret on the Defensive (Maigret se défend, 1940), the Commissioner is accused of attempted seduction by a highly placed official's daughter whom he has come to help; he is called on the carpet by the Prefect of Police and temporarily suspended. The novel recounts how he manages to clear himself of this absurd charge.
- 28 In My Friend Maigret (Mon ami Maigret, 1949).
- 29 In Maigret's Failure (Un échec de Maigret, 1956).
- 30 In Maigret's Boyhood Friend (L'ami d'enfance de Maigret, 1968).
- 31 In Maigret Returns (Maigret, 1934).

NOTES TO PP. 99-117

- 32 For example, in A Crime in Holland (Un crime en Hollande, 1931) or in Guinguette by the Seine (La guinguette à deux sous, 1932).
- 33 In Maigret and the Minister (Maigret chez le ministre, 1954).
- 34 For a discussion of this passage, see Jappe 2001: 53.
- 35 For examples in the area of social services, see Astier 1997.
- 36 On this point, see Boltanski 2011 [2009]: 143–54.
- 37 On this point, see Laval 2007, especially 309–20.
- 38 In Victorian and Edwardian England, the difference between the upper bourgeoisie and the nobility was much less pronounced than it was in France. There were several reasons for this: first, the important role of intermarriage and the conferring of nobility; secondly, the fact that the landed nobility turned very early towards large-scale enterprises necessary for the development of capitalism, either within the territory of Great Britain itself or in lands integrated into the British Empire; and finally, the fact that those who held great bourgeois fortunes were acquiring vast rural holdings that favoured their integration into the gentry. 'Fortune, in fact, was a powerful factor of assimilation', as Monica Charlot and Roland Marx put it (1978: 56). According to the territorial survey of 1873, 7,000 persons owned fourfifths of the land. Around one-third of these great holdings belonged to 'people without titles of nobility' (ibid.). Locally, members of the gentry in large numbers took charge of the 'administrative and legal functions' that, in France, 'were covered by paid civil servants' (55). It was also from this social elite that the political elite was recruited at the national level. In 1886, nearly half the representatives of the British people in the House of Commons were from the great landowning families of Great Britain and Ireland. One had to 'be rich to sit in Parliament', owing in particular to the high cost of electoral campaigns. 'From the social standpoint, the British governmental elite remained aristocratic in origin for a long time. Of 103 members of the Cabinet between 1830 and 1868, 56 came from the great land-holding noble families, 12 from the nobility with smaller holdings' (201); only 21 were businessmen or top government officials, mostly men of independent means. Not until 1874 did workers make their way into the House of Commons. More generally, see Charlot and Marx 1978: 54-7, 197-202.
- 39 'The rule of law imposes itself . . . in the framework of the three principles defined, as early as 1855, by A. V. Dicey. The *principle of legality*, which excludes all arbitrary or discretionary power and attributes to the law its essential role of safeguarding the individual in the face of power . . . The *principle of impartiality*, which places every citizen on equal footing in terms of duties and rights with regard to the law . . . Finally, the *principle of constitutionality*, according to which no law by definition can be anti-constitutional which amounts to saying that a vote in Parliament suffices, under ordinary conditions, to suppress or change any element of the "Constitution" of the rights of man and the rights of British citizens, such as, for example, the monarchy or *Habeas Corpus*' (Charlot 1976: 7–8).
- 40 On the political implications of the superego, see Balibar 2007.
- 41 The period during which Simenon wrote the bulk of the Maigret stories was also the period during which a great deal of attention was paid in France to the 'myth' of the two hundred families (see Sédillot 1988).

NOTES TO PP. 126-42

CHAPTER 4 IDENTIFYING SECRET AGENTS

- 1 An example can be found at the beginning of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *Flight to Arras* (1942) in the author's gripping description of the debacle of 1940 when German forces overwhelmed French defences.
- 2 If we are to accept the thesis developed by Simon Winder in the book he devoted to Ian Fleming (Winder 2006), the creation of the James Bond character in 1952 marks the end of the cycle that links the spy novel in its conservative and nationalist expressions to the colonial history of the British Empire. According to Winder, the invention of James Bond, a flamboyant secret agent in Her Majesty's service, and the immediate, overwhelming success of the novels in which he appeared, must be understood as reactions to the humiliations aroused by the decline of the Empire and, more generally, by Great Britain's mediocrity after the war.
- 3 Biographical information about John Buchan comes from Butts 1990.
- 4 The first three works by this prolific author have remained the best known: King Solomon's Mines (1885), Allan Quatermain (1887) and She (1887), available in the Penguin Popular Classics collection. Haggard's influence on twentieth-century popular literature was considerable (Edgar Rice Burroughs was one of his most notable imitators). His novels have frequently been adapted for film or television.
- 5 Richard Hannay is the hero of four other novels published after *The Thirty-Nine Steps: Greenmantle* (1916), *Mr Standfast* (1919), *The Three Hostages* (1924) and *The Island of Sheep* (1936).
- 6 Rogue Male was adapted for the screen in 1941 by Fritz Lang under the title Man Hunt.
- 7 On the origin of Hitler's 'ideas' and those of National Socialism, see Kershaw 1991, chapter 1, 'Power of the Idea': 16–36.
- 8 According to Goebbels's *Journal*, quoted in Brayard 2006: 467–70.
- 9 Speech by Hitler, 13 July 1934, quoted in ibid.: 443, 445.
- 10 Article by Carl Schmitt published in 1934, quoted in ibid.: 443–5.
- 11 On the important role played by Dickens as a social critic, see Himmelfarb 1984.
- 12 See Butler's *Erewhon* (1980 [1872]), which encompasses a ferocious critique of Victorian society in the tradition of imaginary voyages, and also *The Way of All Flesh*, published three decades later (1903), which describes in a realistic, ironic and merciless fashion the customs of the upper crust of English society.
- 13 It is impossible not to be struck by the similarities between the way anti-Semitic European literature presents the figure of the 'Jew' in the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth and the way Islamophobic literature is constructing the image of the 'Arab' living in Europe today. In both cases, a population is stigmatized not only inasmuch as it is presumed to be foreign to the 'national culture' and 'national values', but also in that it is presumed to embody both scandalous wealth (the 'oil magnates' taking the place of Jewish financiers), repugnant poverty ('ghettos' in some places, 'suburbs' in others) and a significant political threat (with 'Islamism' substituting for anarchy and communism). We can credit John Le Carré with incorporating in a recent spy novel a critical description of contemporary Islamophobia, especially as expressed by the police (A Most Wanted Man, 2008).

NOTES TO PP. 144-65

- 14 Anti-Semitic remarks can be found in other works by Buchan, especially *Greenmantle*, set in the Middle East, and in *The Three Hostages*. The father of one of the hostages, Mr Julius Victor, an American millionaire, is thus described as 'the whitest Jew since the Apostle Paul' (20). I note that once again this remark is omitted from the French translation. Discussing Buchan's anti-Semitism, Miles Donald notes numerous instances of unfavourable characterizations of Jews as well as some positive ones, but he points out that these do not lead to 'a balanced portrayal'; rather, 'we are simply offered positive and negative aspects which exist independently, without connection' (1990: 62). In fact, there was nothing unusual about Buchan's attitude, and one can find similar expressions in many, if not most, of the popular French and English writers of the late nineteenth century and the first third of the twentieth.
- 15 An important step in this process was the publication of a work by a member of the French secret services, Henri Rollin: his *L'Apocalypse de notre temps* (2005 [1939]) was condemned to destruction by the Germans in 1940.
- 16 The others are *The Dark Frontier* (1935), *Uncommon Danger* (1937), *Epitaph for a Spy* (1938), *Cause for Alarm* (1938) and *The Mask of Demetrios* (1940). The latter, the best-known of all Ambler's books, is set among the conflicts that tore Turkey apart in the aftermath of the First World War.
- 17 Maugham operated mostly in Switzerland, but he also carried out a mission in Russia intended to save the Kerensky government. See Woods 2008: 54–60.
- 18 Greene initially wrote *The Third Man* as a screenplay for the film of the same name directed by Carol Reed.
- 19 Orwell was probably inspired in part by Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1921), viewed as prophetic. (I thank Eric Vigne for introducing me to this novel, which I am sorry not to have known much earlier.)
- 20 In a book devoted to Orwell, John Newsinger reviews the studies in which *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has been denounced as a book marking Orwell's break with socialism, with arguments based on the way violently anti-communist or extreme right-wing individuals or associations have used the text. Newsinger shows that Orwell's intention was not to oppose socialism but to pursue it by other means. However, because the author died right after the publication of the novel, he did not have time to correct the erroneous interpretations of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in any public way (Newsinger 1999: 120–6).
- 21 Thus *Nineteen Eighty-Four* can be distinguished from Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945) by the much broader applicability of its critique. *Animal Farm* reads clearly as an anti-Soviet pamphlet, written from an anarchist or Trotskyite point of view, as Orwell himself indicates in a letter to Dwight Macdonald (see Newsinger 1999: 117–18). In this sense, *Animal Farm* can be situated as a direct product of Orwell's experiences in the ranks of the POUM (the Worker's Party of Marxist Unification) during the Spanish Civil War (see Orwell 1952 [1938]).
- 22 On the way in which discussions bearing on the 'reality' of observed phenomena have invaded debates focused on statistical 'givens', starting with the multiplication of 'benchmarkings' used not only as tools for recording data but also as tools for governance, see Didier 2011.
- 23 This is the title of a book published by Jean Baudrillard in 1991.

NOTES TO PP. 166-82

- 24 See *Incidences* 2 (October 2006), an issue devoted to the analysis of forms of belief established by initiatory trajectories, with texts by Donald Tuzin, Octave Mannoni and Claude Lévi-Strauss.
- 25 This figure the suspected non-existence of the desired secret, and, at the same time, the impossibility of abandoning the quest, which is consubstantial with life itself is at the heart of Franz Kafka's unfinished novel *The Castle*, written more than twenty-five years before *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Thus the mysterious character Klamm, whom the innkeeper dares not even call by his name, and on whom the fate of the surveyor K. depends, is finally glimpsed through a hole cut in a door and revealed in his full banality and mediocrity, a caricature of a complacent bourgeois: 'his cheeks drooped slightly . . . He had . . . a pair of pince-nez, set on his nose at a crooked angle . . . his right hand, holding a Virginia cigarette, lay on his knee' (Kafka 2009 [1926]: 36). Klamm exists, in his greatness, only as absence, shadow or mask. The quest sets up a situation with no outlet. Looking for Klamm is useless, but giving up the search is worse. (For an introduction that stresses the impossible search for 'meaning', see David 1976).

CHAPTER 5 THE ENDLESS INQUIRIES OF 'PARANOIDS'

- 1 For examples of denunciations of conspiracy theories in French literature, in addition to Taguieff 2005, see Campion-Vincent 2005 and, from a journalistic standpoint, Vitkine 2005. There are many similar specimens in the abundant American literature on conspiracy theories; we shall examine these later on.
- 2 Freud (1958 [1911]). The issue of investments and their displacements is addressed on pp. 73–5.
- 3 This evocation of the clinical picture of paranoia in the period between 1900 and 1910 is based in particular on Jacques Lacan's doctoral thesis (1980 [1932]), especially the first part: 'Position théorique et dogmatique du problème'; on the texts by Emil Kraepelin, Eugenio Tanzi, Paul Sérieux and Joseph Capgras collected in Bercherie 1982; and on Postel 1974–5.
- 4 It is in this respect, most notably, that Freud opposed Emil Kraepelin, even though he used Kraepelin's classification (which continued to dominate psychiatric practice for a long time). Kraepelin had developed the notion of 'endogenic psychosis', as Jacques Postel explains (1970). For Kraepelin, every illness obeys an 'underlying morbid process' that must be interpreted on the basis of the 'terminal phase'. 'We note, through a thorough examination, that the distinctions that are most profound at the beginning do not keep the illness from imprinting its same uniform seal on the terminal dementia. Thus there is only one way to resolve this problem (of diagnosis), which is as delicate as it is important: that is to explain the earlier phases of the illness by its terminal phase' (quoted in Postel 1970: 23).
- 5 Scheler himself had a Lutheran father and a Jewish mother. He converted to Catholicism before giving up religion altogether.
- 6 On the way the question of women was debated in France from the late nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth, see Rennes 2007.
- 7 I thank Cyprien Tasset for his generosity in giving me access to the documentation on this theme that he has put together for his thesis on 'precarious intellectuals' in today's France.

NOTES TO PP. 184-201

- 8 The thesis defended by Uri Eisenzweig (2001), according to which poets were sympathetic towards anarchism and novelists antipathetic, is interesting for our purposes in that it places the question of realism at the centre of the analysis of the relation between literature and literary anarchism. In this view, while poets, and especially symbolists, established an analogy between 'direct action' and what they meant to impose on language (the 'poetics of the bomb'), French novelists lost interest in 'terrorism' because the 'gratuitous' and 'absurd' character of such acts seemed to them to prevent their insertion within the framework of a realistic representation of the social world.
- 9 As Eisenzweig points out, the figure of the degenerate and decadent anarchist aristocrat is a stereotype of late nineteenth-century nationalistic literature (2001: 103).
- 10 See Losurdo 2006, especially 43–55.
- 11 Doctors Sérieux and Capgras (1909) put Rousseau in the category of delusional interpreters. David Bensoussan (1974) provides a bibliography that includes some thirty references to works or studies published between 1907 and 1966 on 'Rousseau's malady'. Finally, Jean Starobinski, in the essays that conclude his *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: la transparence et l'obstacle*, devotes several pages to 'Rousseau's illness' (1988 [1971]: 365–77), but from a very different angle from that of his predecessors. He is trying to understand 'what use a man made of his malady', which is something that 'no anatomical evidence can tell us' (376).
- 12 On the history of the notion of totalitarianism from the 1950s to the early 1980s, and on its use in the French intellectual and political world in France in the 1970s, see Christofferson 2004.
- 13 On the origins and ambiguities of the notion of 'populism', see Laclau 2005.
- 14 Hofstadter 2008a (1965); virtually every study on 'conspiracy theories' refers to this text.
- 15 An excellent analysis of Hofstadter's intellectual itinerary can be found in Brown 2006.
- 16 One of the final essays in *The Paranoid Style* attests to this attachment. In 'What happened to the antitrust movement?' (based on a lecture delivered at a conference on the political and social environment of the business world in the United States), Hofstadter deplores the loss of vitality of the anti-trust movement. He concludes in terms that seem to announce the social-democratic critiques of what came to be called 'neo-liberalism' some twenty years later: 'Today our greatest domestic danger lies not in our failure to produce enough goods because we do not have enough competition, but in our failure to render certain humane, healing, humanly productive and restorative social services that are not comprehended at all in the ethos of competition' (2008c: 236–7).
- 17 These arguments are well documented and discussed at length in Marcus 1999.
- 18 As far as the United States is concerned, the most complete source regarding accusations of conspiracy and counter-accusations of paranoia from the American Revolution to our day is Knight 2003.
- 19 On the Roswell affair and more generally on the accusations of conspiracy surrounding flying saucers, see the works of Pierre Lagrange, in particular Lagrange 2007.
- 20 The books published on the Kennedy assassination over the last fifty years

NOTES TO PP. 202-6

are so numerous that I shall not attempt to list even the most famous ones here. According to Peter Knight, an exhaustive bibliography would include more than 2,000 titles, not counting magazine articles. The most recent work in French, to my knowledge, was written by a history professor at the University of Metz whose speciality is France's First Empire (Lentz 2010). The book Peter Knight himself devoted to the Kennedy assassination (Knight 2007) deserves special mention: it does not propose a solution to the mystery, but it focuses on the representations to which the event has given rise, in official publications, in writings that challenge the official conclusions and in literature, films and television programmes

- 21 In recent European history, one of the examples most frequently cited involves the attacks from which Italy suffered in its 'years of lead', especially the Piazza Fontana bombing in Milan in 1969 and the bombing in Bologna's Central Station in 1980. First blamed on the Italian far left, these attacks have been attributed more and more often to far-right groups connected with the secret services, especially the Gladio/StayBehind network that was created by Americans in the late 1950s to counter the rise of communism in Europe. These suspicions were reinforced by Giulio Andreotti's declaration in 1980 that the Gladio network whose reality had been contested up to that point actually existed. On these issues, see Hervé Rayner's work, especially Rayner 2008: 162–93; see also Wagner-Pacifici 1999.
- 22 One can find a particularly caricatural and particularly tragic example of these supposed 'battles of the experts' in the polemic that has been going on for more than a decade over the fatal shooting of a Palestinian child in Netzarim on 30 September 2000, its televised re-transmission and the accompanying commentary, which attributed the shots to the Israeli army on the basis of photographs and the photographer's testimony. The opponents first tried to prove by counter-expertise that the shots had been fired by Palestinian policemen, then, broadening their accusations, they claimed that it was a scene staged by the Palestinians and that the child who had been deliberately killed was not the one whose identity had been made public (see Anderlin 2010).
- 23 For a challenge to the belief often affirmed by journalists that, in our 'complex' and 'open' societies it has become impossible to keep secret very long facts whose divulging would have 'historical' importance, see 'L'invention de la "théorie du complot" (Pièces et Main d'oeuvre 2007).
- 24 With the help of the United States and France, between the mid-1950s and the 1970s, the state of Israel managed to acquire a large nuclear arsenal whose existence was repeatedly denied until very recently. The history of this industrial, military and political event has been carefully retraced in Hersh 1991.
- 25 For a discussion of the thematics of agency in French, see Pharo and Quéré 1990.
- 26 In his effort to establish the actantial system of conspiracies, James Mileham envisages cases of this sort (1982: 25–7).
- 27 David Klugman devoted a book to the residents of the village of Prélenfreydu-Gua (Isère) who kept silent during the Occupation, even after hostages were taken, to save the lives of Jewish children (1994).
- 28 For a critical look at the principal definitions proposed, see Sunstein and Vermeule 2009. For an analysis of the bases for legal decisions in support of accusations of conspiracy in the United States, see Abbate 1974.

NOTES TO PP. 207-14

- 29 On the role attributed to trust in various political philosophies, Locke's in particular, see Dunn 1988; on the relation between trust and suspicion, see Luhmann 2006: 82ff.
- 30 On the social norms of politeness that govern question-asking in various societies, see Goody 1978.
- 31 For examples taken from daily life in the Soviet Union under Stalin, see Kharkhordin 1999 and Nérard 2004.
- 32 For examples of *affairs* in various contexts, see Boltanski and Thévenot 1989; for historical examples, see Boltanski et al. 2007.
- 33 See Boltanski 1993 for a discussion of this issue.
- 34 'The mind can never possibly find the effect in the supposed cause by the most accurate scrutiny and examination. For the effect is totally different from the cause, and consequently can never be discovered in it. Motion in the second billiard ball is a quite distinct event from motion in the first, nor is there anything in the one to suggest the smallest hint of the other' (Hume 1955 [1748]: 43).
- 35 Several articles on this topic are included in Maccoby, Newcomb and Hartley 1958.
- 36 See Boltanski et al. 1996 and also Chateauraynaud and Torny 2000. On the development of interest in whistle-blowers in the United States, see Westin 1981.
- 37 For an in-depth analysis of the paradoxes raised by free speech understood as a fundamental right, see Iacub 2010, especially 63–82.
- 38 Numerous examples of cases of this type can be found, for example, in Paul Jobin's studies of work done in Japan by unions and associations over more than two decades in an effort to win recognition of the existence of Minamata disease, which is caused by the mercury content of certain industrial wastes (Jobin 2006).
- 39 On the way the same person may shift from adherence to incredulity depending on the situation of utterance, see Claverie 2003.
- 40 For an analysis of the petitions of writers during the Dreyfus affair, see Charle 1990.
- 41 'I was young,' Leon Blum wrote in *Souvenirs sur l'affaire Dreyfus*, 'and there was something that experience had not yet taught me: that the most fallacious of the operations of the mind is calculating the reaction of a man or a woman towards a truly unanticipated event in advance. One is almost inevitably wrong when one claims to be solving this calculation problem by applying already acquired psychological data, by assuming a sort of logical extension of the known character of past life. Every trial is new, and every trial finds a new man. Among the stars of anti-Dreyfusism, and even of Dreyfusism, some did not occupy their logical place, their logically predictable place, and in my naïveté I found these criss-crossings disconcerting' (74).
- 42 Pierre Taguieff (2005) thus undertakes, in a perspective that has become classic, as we saw in recalling Richard Hofstadter's work, to associate belief in 'conspiracy theories' with extremist political positions, generally, in this case, on the far right. The examples Taguieff gives are certainly convincing, but they do not make it possible to deploy the entire range of atypical historical explanations, or to clarify the way these theories are identified as unacceptable, particularly in the case of narratives that occupy an intermediate position between what is generally accepted and what is generally rejected.

NOTES TO PP. 214-22

- 43 On this point, see the work of sociolinguists, especially Labov 1972a and 1972b.
- 44 One technique designed to study the way in which people grasp events known through the media (which I am in the process of trying out) consists in giving the investigation the form of a collective game. Precisely because of its ludic character, this technique appears to present the advantage of suspending, at least in part, the constraints of respectability and the effects of self-censorship that weigh so heavily on interview situations. But, of course, since no technique is neutral in its effects, this approach stimulates an imaginative and playful attitude that is moreover probably never completely absent from the relation that ordinary persons maintain towards events that are known to them solely or primarily through the media. The game is set up as follows: a group of persons (generally twelve to fifteen in number) is divided into four teams working in concert. Each team receives a pack of cards. The first pack displays representations of recent events (for example, the explosion of the nuclear power plant in Japan, or the Strauss-Kahn affair that played out in a Sofitel hotel in New York in the spring of 2011). The second pack shows entities or groups that one may (or may not) hold responsible for these events (for example, 'secret services', 'forces of nature', 'foreigners', 'God'). The third pack depicts entities or groups that may be viewed as particular victims of these events. The fourth shows entities or groups that may (or may not) be viewed as useful for improving the situation created by these events (helpers, to use Greimas's terminology). The first team chooses an event, which is then indicated on a blackboard visible to all. The second, third and fourth teams choose one or more actants deemed to be responsible parties, victims, or helpers. Then a general discussion begins (and is recorded) regarding the appropriateness of these attributions, so as to bring to light the instances of agreement and disagreement bearing in particular on chains of causality.
- 45 See especially Gérard Genette, who defines a plausible utterance as one that can do without overt motivation, that is, one that need not unveil its function in the economy of the narrative (1979 [1969]: 71–100).
- 46 For a classic example, see Cohen and Nagel 1963 (1934).
- 47 In remarks published after his death (On Certainty, 1979 [1969]), Ludwig Wittgenstein discusses George Edward Moore's ideas about common sense and insists on the distinction between the type of uncertainty that can be manifested following a personal experience and the types that can develop with respect to facts or interpretations transmitted by others; to be taken for granted, the latter require a certain form of preliminary confidence or 'faith'. To believe what I am told, '[m]ust I not begin to trust somewhere? That is to say: somewhere I must begin with not-doubting' (fragment 150). Now, a decision is required: 'Rather, we must first determine the role of deciding for or against a proposition' (fragment 198). But this decision is revocable: 'I learned an enormous amount and accepted it on human authority, and then I found some things confirmed or disconfirmed by my own experience' (fragment 161).
- 48 On fiction as the construction of possible worlds, see Pavel 1988.
- 49 On the social and political role of the re-description of current events in the mode of tales, see Skinner 2001.
- 50 In the schematization of these two modes of story circulation, we can

NOTES TO PP. 227-38

recognize the way in which Marx describes the two modes of market circulation, pre-capitalist and capitalist: that is, merchandise – money – merchandise vs. money – merchandise – money (see Jappe 2003).

CHAPTER 6 POLICING SOCIOLOGICAL INQUIRY

- 1 On the history of experimental methods and their narrative expressions, see Licoppe 1996.
- 2 Smith's theory of the 'impartial spectator' and of 'sympathy', inspired by Newtonian physics, is based on a model that includes a small number of actants in interaction (the suffering patient; the individual observing him; the impartial spectator, who is a disengaged spectator introjected into the empirical spectator; finally, the benefactor or malefactor who has produced the victim's suffering). See Raphaël 1975, and, for an application in the field of sociology, see Boltanski 1993.
- 3 The model for this approach is found in Condorcet 2009 (1795).
- 4 Concerning Max Weber's discussion of the notion of meaning (*Sinn*), Peter Winch writes: 'For example, liquidity preference is a technical concept of economics: it is not generally used by business men in the conduct of their affairs but by the economist who wishes to *explain* the nature and consequences of certain kinds of business behaviour. But it is logically tied to concepts which do enter into business activity, for its use by the economist presupposes his understanding of what it is to conduct a business, which in turn involves an understanding of such business concepts as money, profit, cost, risk, etc. It is only the relation between his account and these concepts which makes it an account of economic activity as opposed, say, to a piece of theology' (Winch 1976 [1958]: 89).
- 5 Jules Monnerot and Julien Freund, both active participants in the Resistance, played significant roles in the circulation of pamphlets against Durkheimianism (Monnerot 1946) and against Marxism, drawing on antidemocratic intellectual traditions (Pareto, Mosca, Schmitt). At first close to Raymond Aron (who directed Freund's thesis), they organized their work around the fight against communism, which led to their classification as 'liberals' for a time; later, especially after 1968, they shifted towards the far right, participating in the Club de l'Horloge and in GRECE (see Audier 2008, especially 53–76). Pierre-André Taguieff recently published an intellectual biography of Julien Freund in an effort to rehabilitate someone he characterizes as a 'liberal-conservative' (Taguieff 2008). The pamphletary tone of this book allows Taguieff to settle some personal scores with the intellectual left.
- 6 See Boudon 1977 and Albert Hirschman's critique of Boudon (Hirschman 1991).
- 7 From the late 1950s to the 1990s, Gary Becker used microeconomic models of rational choice to explain the investment in education (human capital), the choice of a spouse and divorce, discrimination, the family, crime, the allocation of time, the formation of tastes and so on. One of his intentions was to build a theoretical framework that could structure statistically oriented empirical sociology, after what he saw as the failure of the Parsonian sociology that was still dominant when he began his work. (See Becker's conversation with Richard Swedberg in Swedberg 1990: 27–46; for analyses

- of Becker's place in the relations between economics and sociology, see Swedberg 2003.)
- 8 This was still the case in the early 1980s, as Laurent Thévenot and I showed in a study of the way people had internalized the classifications associated with the establishment of the welfare state, the socio-professional categories in particular. The latter, which were used both for bureaucratic and critical purposes, were integrated into the cognitive tools available to so-called ordinary persons for identifying themselves, identifying others and orienting themselves in social space (see Boltanski and Thévenot 1983).
- 9 For an overview in French, see Balibar et al. 1990 and Tarrit n.d.
- 10 See the foundational article by Harrison White and his collaborators: White, Boorman and Breiger 1976.
- 11 On the principles of construction in networks, its origins and its uses, especially in management, see Boltanski and Chiapello 2005 (1999), especially 138–51.
- 12 'All sociologists' discourse rests on primitive terms "status," "role," "group," "social control," "interaction," and "society" do not begin to exhaust the list which *require* an aggregation principle in that their referents are aggregates of persons, collectivities, interrelated "positions," or "generalised actors." However, sociologists have been largely content to aggregate in only two ways: either by positing categorical aggregates (e.g., "functional subsystems," "classes") whose relation to concrete social structure has been tenuous; or by cross-tabulating individuals according to their attributes (e.g., lower-middle-class white Protestants who live in inner city areas and vote Democrat). . . . In contrast to the standard wisdom, there is a growing list of empirical findings regarding the effect (and frequency) of "accidents" and "luck" in the actual functioning of societies, that is, gaps between the categorial model that seeks to identify the specific effects of the variables, and reality' (White et al. 1976: 733).
- 13 Degenne and Forsé 1994. [Translator's note: The illustration is not included in the 1999 English translation.]
- 14 See for example Lee 2007.
- 15 See George Akerlof's seminal article (Akerlof 2007).
- 16 For a general overview of the economics of conventions and the problems to which this tendency seeks to offer solutions, see Batifoulier 2001.
- 17 On these various points, see Boltanski 2012 (1990), especially 59-67.
- 18 On the establishment of this division and the aporias to which it has sometimes led, especially in the case of trials for exhibitionism (was the act committed in public or in private?), see Iacub 2008.
- 19 One of the effects of the liberal division between public and private is that it modifies the sense attributed to relations of *friendship*, which, in the ancient world but also in aristocratic society, could have a political extension. On this point, see the work of Allan Silver, especially Silver 1990.
- 20 Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 (1991), especially 251–61. The denunciation of 'scandals' consists primarily, in the French society that took shape beginning with the Third Republic (1870–1940), in unveiling the existence underneath the political bonds that are the only legitimate ones in a civic polity of bonds among persons whose pertinence is established with reference to a domestic polity (which had a legitimate character under the Old Regime). This is the type of bond that Rousseau designated in *The Social Contract* by the term *brigue* (ruse); always tending towards reform, such

- bonds are responsible for the 'degenerative tendency' of governments (see Rousseau 1994 [1862]: 118–33). The opposition between personal bonds and social bonds de-singularized by the action of law makes it possible to retranslate these 'private intrigues with public effects' (Walzer 1974: 28) into the logic of conspiracy.
- 21 'Large private companies have in fact set up effective programmes for collecting and managing information. Initially targeting the company's competitors, these practices, which have been pompously labelled and touted in the media as "economic intelligence", have been rapidly diverted towards a quest for information about public powers and their presumed intentions, about the firms' own employees and even about potential consumers in general' (Thuillier 2000: 145); see also François and Lévy 2003.
- 22 Here are two examples. 'The subject matter of an intelligence analysis (for example, the political situation of a foreign country and how it is likely to evolve) may be similar to the work done in the social sciences. Even so, the two kinds of analysis exhibit important differences that suggest that different approaches may be necessary even if the substantive content is similar. To be useful, an intelligence analysis ought, in discussing the determinants of the political situation in a foreign country, to emphasize those factors that can be manipulated or changed; the consumer of the analysis is, after all, typically interested in affecting that political situation and not just knowing about it' (Shulsky 1993: 191-2). 'How, then, is intelligence any different from the market research that many companies conduct or from traditional research as it is carried out in laboratories, think tanks, and academia? After all, these types of research are also intended to reduce uncertainty. The answer is that most methods of intelligence and nonintelligence research are identical, with one important distinction. When accurate information is not available through traditional (and less expensive) means, then a wide range of specialized techniques and methods unique to the intelligence field are called into play. Academics are unlikely to have intercepted telephone communications at their disposal to use as a viable technique for collection and analysis' (Clark 2010: 13).
- 23 See, for example, the work that political scientist Hervé Rayner devoted to the operation 'Clean Hands' in Italy, and in particular the way Rayner reconstitutes what he calls the 'Andreotti network' (Rayner 2005: 253–68). 'His [Andreotti's] position, unlike any other in the political realm, depends on the social surface of a consolidated network at the heart of the Church visà-vis the American authorities, governmental institutions (mainly the army, the police, intelligence, diplomacy, the judiciary, industry and the banking sector), but also well situated within private industry and at the heart of *Cosa Nostra*.' In the pages that follow, Rayner unfolds the multiple ties that constitute this 'network', and then the way they come undone during the campaign surrounding the Mafia trial.
- 24 Richard Barbrook has had the good idea of bringing the entire set of terms together in a single work, along with the definitions that have been forged by sociologists (or social philosophers) to designate the nebulas that seemed to them to constitute the basis for emerging groups destined to play a central role in economic or social life, sooner or later: for example, 'knowledge workers', 'cognitarians', 'swarm-capitalists', 'hackers' and so on. See Barbrook 2007 (I thank Cyprien Tasset for introducing me to this book).

NOTES TO PP. 255-68

- 25 On the history of the category of the 'excluded' and its shift from the language of welfare associations into sociological terminologies and then into administrative jargon and statistical nomenclature, see Didier 1996.
- 26 According to Wanda de Lemos Capeller, one of the problems is 'the penetration of illegal markets into the workings of legal economic systems' (1997: 72).
- 27 Since 'chains of command' may be opaque and hard to follow, it is often difficult to link an individual act to the directives that incited or authorized it (see Claverie and Maison 2009).
- 28 The French anti-terrorism measure known as Perben Law II can be found at http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000 249995&dateTexte=&categorieLien=id.
- 29 The distinction between what 'obliges [us] to say' and what 'prevents [us] from saying' was introduced by Roland Barthes in 1977 in his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France (Barthes 2005 [1977]).
- 30 See, for example, 'Éric Laurent, le roi des menteurs!!!' (Bestfriend n.d.)
- 31 As a counter-example, we might take the magnificent book Alain Dewerpe devoted to the Charonne massacre (Dewerpe 2006). However, it should probably be noted on the one hand that Dewerpe is not a sociologist, strictly speaking, but rather a historian, and on the other hand that he is the son of one of the victims of the massacre.
- 32 A certain number of contemporary theoretical undertakings, and among the most stimulating (often characterized as post-structuralist), tend in this direction; in Foucault's wake, they seek to articulate global political and economic changes with the formation of new subjectivities, and/or to construct frameworks that make it possible to control changes of scale. In so doing, they face the risk of choosing between a global approach that tends to lose sight of the actors and a generalization based on the local situation. Among a large number of works, I shall single out just a few: regarding the treatment of scale, Saskia Sassen (2006); regarding political arrangements, Wendy Brown, especially Brown 2010; and of course the work of Antonio Negri, especially Hardt and Negri 2000, 2004; Negri and Cocco 2007 [2006].

EPILOGUE

- 1 See Ranulf 1938. Written by a sociologist and historian of Antiquity, this book was a response to the rise of Nazism in Germany. It emphasizes the way imaginary communities to borrow Benedict Anderson's term attempt to establish and reinforce their unity by accusing and persecuting victims chosen among foreigners and marginal groups.
- 2 Echoing the 'theme of the traitor and the hero', let us recall Arthur Rowe's dream in Graham Greene's *The Ministry of Fear* (Greene 1943), published a year before Borges's short story. In this dream, Arthur Rowe, who is at once a child and the hunted man he has become, is having tea with his mother in his family home. Addressing his mother, he says, '[y]ou used to laugh at the books Mlle Savage read about spies, and murders, and violence, and wild motor-car chases, but, dear, that's real life: it's what we've all made of the world since you died. I'm your little Arthur who wouldn't hurt a beetle and I'm a murderer too. . . . My dear, my dear, my dear, I'm glad you are dead.

NOTE TO P. 273

- ... Let me lend you the *History of Contemporary Society*. It's in hundreds of volumes, but most of them are sold in cheap editions: *Death in Piccadilly*, *The Ambassador's Diamonds*, *The Theft of the Naval Papers*, *Diplomacy*, *Seven Days' Leave*, *The Four Just Men*...' (63–4).
- 3 See Löwy 2004: 81–100, on Kafka's anarchist sympathies and on *The Trial* as an unveiling of the 'alienated' and 'oppressive' nature of the modern state, including states that claim to be governed by the rule of law.

REFERENCES

- Aaronovitch, David (2009) Voodoo Histories: The Role of the Conspiracy Theory in Shaping Modern History. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Abbate, Fred J. (1974) 'The conspiracy doctrine: a critique.' *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 3(3): 295–311.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (2006 [1949]) *Philosophy of New Music*, trans. and ed. Robert Hullot-Kentor. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Adorno, Theodor W., Aaron, Betty Ruth, Frenkel-Brunswik, Else et al. (1982 [1950]) *The Authoritarian Personality*. New York: Norton.
- Agamben, Giorgio (1998) *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Agamben, Giorgio (2005) State of Exception, trans. Kevin Attell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Akerlof, George (2007) 'The market for "lemons": quality, uncertainty and the market mechanism'. *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 84(3): 488–500.
- Alexander, Jeffrey (2006) The Civil Sphere. Boston, MA: Oxford University Press.
- Ambler, Eric (1941) Background to Danger, in Double Decker. Cleveland: World Publishing, pp. 1–178.
- Amiel, Henri-Frédéric (1976–94) *Journal intime*, ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Philippe M. Monnier. 12 vols. Lausanne: Éditions L'Âge d'homme.
- Amselle, Jean-Loup and M'Bokolo, Elikia (eds) (1985) Au coeur de l'ethnie: ethnies, tribalisme et État en Afrique. Paris: La Découverte.
- Anderlin, Charles (2010) *Un enfant est mort*. Paris: Don Quichotte.
- Anderson, Benedict (2006 [1983]) Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. London: Verso.
- Angenot, Marc (1982) La parole pamphlétaire: typologie des discours modernes. Paris: Payot.
- Anonymous (1554) The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes, trans. David Rowland. Warminster, UK: Aris & Phillips.
- Ansart, Pierre (1970) Naissance de l'anarchisme. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Arendt, Hannah (1958) *The Human Condition*, 2nd edn, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Arendt, Hannah (2007 [1946]) 'Franz Kafka, appreciated anew', in Susannah Young-ah Gottlieb (ed.), *Reflections on Literature and Culture*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pp. 94–109.
- Arneil, Barbara (2002) 'Becoming versus being: a critical analysis of the child in liberal theory', in David Archard and Colin M. Macleod (eds), *The Moral and Political Status of Children*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 70–96.
- Arnold, Gordon B. (2008) Conspiracy Theory in Film, Television and Politics. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Assouline, Pierre (1996) Simenon. Paris: Gallimard.
- Astier, Isabelle (1997) Revenu minimum et souci d'insertion. Paris: Declée de Brouwer.
- Audier, Serge (2008) La pensée anti-68: essai sur les origines d'une restauration intellectuelle. Paris: La Découverte.
- Auerbach, Erich (2003 [1946]) Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature, trans. Willard R. Trask. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Austin, J. L. (1979 [1956]) 'A plea for excuses', in *Philosophical Papers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 175–204.
- Badiou, Alain (2005 [1988]) Being and Event, trans. Oliver Feltham. London: Continuum.
- Balibar, Étienne (2007) 'Freud et Kelsen 1922: l'invention du Surmoi'. *Incidences* 3 (October): 21–74.
- Balibar, Étienne, Bidet, Jacques, Lecercle, Jean-Jacques and Texier, Jacques (eds) (1990) *Le marxisme analytique anglo-saxon*, special issue, *Actuel Marx*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Barbrook, Richard (2007) The Class of the New. London: Mute Publishing.
- Barruel, Abbé (1818) Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire du jacobinisme. Lyon: T. Pitrat.
- Barthes, Roland (2005 [1977]) *The Neutral: Lecture Course at the Collège de France* 1977/1978, trans. Rosalind E. Krauss and Denis Hollier. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Baruch, Marc-Olivier (1997) Servir l'État français: l'administration en France de 1940 à 1944. Paris: Fayard.
- Basaure, Mario (2008–9) 'Être juste avec Foucault: la sociologie implicite de Foucault et sa critique de la psychanalyse'. *Incidences* 4–5 (Mar.): 195–217.
- Basham, Lee (2001) 'Living with the conspiracy'. *Philosophical Forum* 3: 262–80.
- Basham, Lee (2003) 'Malevolent global conspiracy'. *Journal of Social Philosophy* 34: 91–103.
- Batifoulier, Philippe (ed.) (2001) Théorie des conventions. Paris: Economica.
- Baudou, Jacques and Schleret, Jean-Jacques (eds) (2001) Le polar. Paris: Larousse.
- Baudrillard, Jean (1991) La guerre du Golfe n'a pas eu lieu. Paris: Galilée.
- Bauman, Zygmunt (1993) Modernity and Ambivalence. Cambridge: Polity Press. Bayard, Pierre (2000 [1998]) Who Killed Roger Ackroyd? The Mystery behind the Agatha Christie Mystery, trans. Carol Cosman. New York: New Press.
- Beaud, Olivier (1994) La puissance de l'État. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Benedict, Ruth (1989 [1934]) Patterns of Culture. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Beniger, James (1986) The Control Revolution: Technological and Economic Origins of the Information Society. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Benjamin, Walter (1986 [1920/1]) 'Critique of violence'. *Reflections*, ed. Peter Demetz, trans. Edmond Jephcott. New York: Schocken, pp. 277–300.
- Bensoussan, David (1974) La maladie de Rousseau. Paris: Klincksieck.
- Bercherie, Paul (ed.) (1982) Classiques de la paranoïa, Analytica. Cahiers de recherche du Champ freudien, vol. 30. Paris: Navarin-Seuil.
- Bestfriend (n.d.) 'Éric Laurent, le roi des menteurs!!!' http://monde2bestfriend. over-blog.com. Accessed 9 June 2012.
- Bloom, Clive (1990) Spy Thrillers: From Buchan to Le Carré. London: Macmillan.
- Blum, Léon (1935) Souvenirs sur l'affaire Dreyfus. Paris: Gallimard.
- Bollème, Geneviève (1971) La Bibliothèque bleue: littérature populaire en France du XVIe au XIXe siècle. Paris: Julliard.
- Boltanski, Ariane (2008) "Messieurs les Machiavélistes": des conseillers italiens du roi dans les années 1560 et 1570'. *Cahiers parisiens/Parisian Notebooks* 4: 463–75.
- Boltanski, Luc (1973a) 'Erving Goffman et le temps du soupçon'. *Information sur les sciences sociales* 12(3): 127–47.
- Boltanski, Luc (1973b) 'L'espace positionnel: multiplicité des positions institutionnelles et habitus de classe'. Revue française de sociologie 14: 3–26.
- Boltanski, Luc (1975a) 'La constitution du champ de la bande dessinée'. *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 1(1): 37–59.
- Boltanski, Luc (1975b) 'Pouvoir et impuissance: projet intellectuel et sexualité dans le *Journal* d'Amiel'. *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 1(5–6): 80–108.
- Boltanski, Luc (1987 [1982]) *The Making of a Class: Cadres in French Society*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Boltanski, Luc (1993) La souffrance à distance: morale humanitaire, médias et politique. Paris: Métailié.
- Boltanski, Luc (1999 [1993]) Distant Suffering: Morality, Media and Politics, trans. Graham Burchell. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Boltanski, Luc (2003) 'Usages faibles, usages forts de l'habitus', in Pierre Encrevé and Rose-Marie Lagrave (eds), *Travailler avec Bourdieu*. Paris, Flammarion, pp. 153–62.
- Boltanski, Luc (2011 [2009]) On Critique: A Sociology of Emancipation, trans. Gregory Elliott. Cambridge: Polity.
- Boltanski, Luc (2012 [1990]) 'Public denunciation', in Love and Justice as Competences: Three Essays on the Sociology of Action, trans. Catherine Porter. Cambridge: Polity, pp. 169–258.
- Boltanski, Luc (2013) *The Foetal Condition*, trans. Catherine Porter. Cambridge: Polity.
- Boltanski, Luc and Chiapello, Ève (2005 [1999]) The New Spirit of Capitalism. London: Verso.
- Boltanski, Luc and Thévenot, Laurent (1983) 'Finding one's way in social space: a study based on games'. *Social Science Information* 22(4–5): 631–81.
- Boltanski, Luc and Thévenot, Laurent (eds) (1989) *Justesse et justice dans le travail*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Boltanski, Luc and Thévenot, Laurent (2006 [1991]) On Justification: Economies of Worth, trans. Catherine Porter. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Boltanski, Luc, Chateauraynaud, Francis, Derouet, Jean-Louis, Lemieux, Cyril and Torny, Didier (1996) Actes du séminaire 'Programme Risques collectives

- et situations de crise', 5th session, 15 February 1996. Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique.
- Boltanski, Luc, Claverie, Élisabeth, Offenstadt, Nicolas and van Damme, Stéphane (eds) (2007) Affaires, scandales et grandes causes: de Socrate à Pinochet. Paris: Stock.
- Bonhomme, Julien (2009) Les voleurs de sexe: anthropologie d'une rumeur africaine. Paris: Seuil.
- Bord, Lucien-Jean (2008) *Dictionnaire Sherlock Holmes*. Paris: Le Cherche-midi. Borges, Jorge Luis (1999 [1944]) 'The theme of the traitor and the hero', in *Collected Fictions*, trans. Andrew Hurley. New York: Penguin.
- Boudon, Raymond (1977) Effets pervers et ordre social. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1984 [1979]) Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste, trans. Richard Nice. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Boyer, Pascal (2001) Et l'homme créa les dieux: comment expliquer les religions. Paris: Laffont.
- Bozzetto, Roger (2003) 'L'impossible portrait du monstre', in Gilles Mengaldo and Jean-Pierre Naugrette (eds), R. L. Stevenson & A. Conan Doyle: Aventures de la fiction. Proceedings of the Colloque de Cerisy. Rennes: Terre de Brume, pp. 141–51.
- Brayard, Florent (2006) La 'solution finale de la question juive': la technique, le temps et les catégories de la décision. Paris: Fayard.
- Brissenden, Robert Francis (1974) Virtue in Distress: Studies in the Novel of Sentiment from Richardson to Sade. London: Macmillan.
- Brown, Dan (2004) The Da Vinci Code. New York: Doubleday.
- Brown, David S. (2006) Richard Hofstadter: An Intellectual Biography. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Brown, Wendy (2010) Walled States, Waning Sovereignty. New York: Zone Books.
- Buchan, John (1993 [1915]) *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, ed. Christopher Harvie. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Buchan, John (1924) The Three Hostages. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Bull, Malcolm (1999) Seeing Things Hidden: Apocalypse, Vision and Totality. London: Verso.
- Burke, Edmund (1818) The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke. London: F. C. and J. Rivington.
- Butler, Samuel (1980 [1872]) Erewhon: or, Over the Range, ed. Hans-Peter Breuer and Daniel F. Howard. London: Associated University Presses.
- Butler, Samuel (1993 [1903]) *The Way of All Flesh*, ed. Michael Mason. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Butts, Denis (1990) 'The hunter and the hunted: the suspense novels of John Buchan', in Clive Bloom (ed.), *Spy Thrillers: From Buchan to Le Carré*. London: Macmillan, pp. 44–57.
- Campion-Vincent, Véronique (2005) La société parano: théories du complot, menaces et incertitudes. Paris: Payot.
- Canler, Louis (1862) Mémoires de Canler, ancien chef du service de Sûreté (1797–1865). Paris: Mercure de France.
- Capeller, Wanda de Lemos (1997) 'La transnationalisation du champ pénal: réflexions sur les mutations du crime et du contrôle'. *Droit et société* 35: 61–77.

- Carr, Caleb (2005) The Italian Secretary: A Further Adventure of Sherlock Holmes. New York: Carroll & Graf.
- Catherine, Robert and Thuillier, Guy (1982) L'être administratif et l'imaginaire. Paris: Economica.
- Cayla, Olivier (1993) 'La qualification, ou la vérité du droit'. *Droits. Revue française de théorie juridique* 18: 1–18.
- Cesoni, Maria Luisa (2004) Criminalité organisée: des représentations sociales aux définitions juridiques. Paris: Librairie générale de droit et de jurisprudence.
- Charle, Christophe (1990) Naissance des intellectuels 1890–1900. Paris: Minuit. Charlot, Monica (1976) Le système politique britannique. Paris: Armand
- Charlot, Monica (1976) *Le système politique britannique*. Paris: Armand Colin.
- Charlot, Monica and Marx, Roland (1978) *La société victorienne*. Paris: Armand Colin.
- Chartier, Roger (1982) 'Espace social et imaginaire social: les intellectuels frustrés au XVIIe siècle'. Les Annales 37(2): 389–400.
- Chartier, Roger (2000) Les origines culturelles de la Révolution française. Paris: Seuil.
- Chateauraynaud, Francis and Torny, Didier (2000) Les sombres précurseurs: une sociologie pragmatique de l'alerte et du risque. Paris: École des hautes études en sciences sociales.
- Chesterton, G. K. (1994) Father Brown Stories. Harmondsworth: Penguin Popular Classics.
- Childers, Erskine (2007 [1903]) The Riddle of the Sands: A Record of Secret Services. London: Penguin Classics.
- Christian, Lynda (1987) *Theatrum Mundi: The History of an Idea*. New York: Garland Publishing.
- Christie, Agatha (1984 [1927]) The Big Four. New York: Berkley Books.
- Christofferson, Michael (2004) French Intellectuals against the Left: The Antitotalitarian Moment of the 1970s. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Clark, Robert M. (2010) Intelligence Analysis: A Target-Centric Approach. Washington, DC: CQPress.
- Claverie, Élisabeth (1984) 'De la difficulté de faire un citoyen: les "acquittements scandaleux" du jury dans la France provinciale du début du XIX^e siècle'. Études rurales 95–96 (January–June): 143–66.
- Claverie, Élisabeth (1994) 'Procès, affaire, cause: Voltaire et l'innovation critique'. *Politix* 26: 76–86.
- Claverie, Élisabeth (1998) 'La naissance d'une forme politique: l'affaire du chevalier de la Barre', in Philippe Roussin (ed.), *Critique et affaires de blasphème à l'époque des Lumières*. Paris: Honoré Champion, pp. 185–265.
- Claverie, Élisabeth (2003) Les guerres de la Vierge: une anthropologie des apparitions. Paris: Gallimard.
- Claverie, Élisabeth and Lamaison, Pierre (1982) L'impossible mariage: violence et parenté en Gévaudan, XVIIe siècle, XVIIIe siècle, XIXe siècle. Paris: Hachette.
- Claverie, Élisabeth and Maison, Raphaëlle (2009) 'L'entreprise criminelle commune devant le Tribunal pénal international pour l'ex-Yougoslavie', in Peter Truche (ed.), *Juger les crimes contre l'humanité vingt ans après le procès Barbie*. Lyon: ENS, pp. 183–205.
- Cochin, Augustin (1979) L'esprit du jacobinisme: une interprétation sociologique de la Révolution française. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

- Cohen, Morris and Nagel, Ernest (1963 [1934]) An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Cohn, Norman (1967) Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World-Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. New York: Harper & Row.
- Coignard, Sophie and Guichard, Marie-Thérèse (2000 [1997]) French Connections: Networks of Influence. New York: Algora.
- Collins, Wilkie (1999 [1868]) *The Moonstone*, intro. P. D. James. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Collins, Wilkie (2002 [1860]) *The Woman in White*, intro. Anne Perry. New York: Modern Library.
- Collovald, Annie and Neveu, Eric (2004) *Lire le noir: enquête sur les lecteurs de récits policiers*. Paris: Bibliothèque du Centre Pompidou.
- Condorcet, Jean-Antoine-Nicolas de Caritat (2009 [1795]) Outlines of an Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind. Chicago: G. Langer.
- Conrad, Joseph (1997 [1907]) The Secret Agent, in Heart of Darkness and The Secret Agent. New York: Doubleday, pp. 103–361.
- Corcuff, Philippe and Fleury, Lison (2001) 'Profondeurs du social et critique politique: hypothèses comparatives sur Maigret et le néo-polar'. *Mouvements* 15–16: 28–34.
- Courtine, Robert (1974) Cahier de recettes de Madame Maigret. Paris: Robert Laffont.
- Coward, Barry and Swann, Julian (2004) Conspiracies and Conspiracy Theory in Early Modern Europe, from the Waldensians to the French Revolution. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Cubitt, Geoffrey (1993) The Jesuit Myth: Conspiracy Theory and Politics in Nineteenth Century France. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Curtis, M. H. (1962) 'The alienated intellectuals of early Stuart England'. *Past and Present* 23: 25–43.
- Darnton, Robert (1979) Bohème littéraire et révolution. Paris: Gallimard.
- Daston, Lorraine (1992) 'Objectivity and the escape from perspective'. *Social Studies of Science* 22: 597–618.
- David, Claude (1976) Introduction to *Oeuvres complètes*, by Franz Kafka, vol. 1. Paris: Gallimard (Pléiade), pp. 1128–38.
- de Blic, Damien (2007) 'Cent ans de scandales financiers en France. Investissement et désinvestissement d'une forme politique', in Luc Boltanski, Élisabeth Claverie, Nicolas Offenstadt and Stéphane Van Damme (eds), *Affaires, scandales et grandes causes*. Paris: Stock, pp. 231–48.
- de Fallois, Bernard (2003 [1961]) Simenon, Paris: Gallimard.
- Dean, Jodi (1998) Aliens in America. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Debord, Guy (1994 [1967]) *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. New York: Zone Books.
- Degenne, Alain and Forsé, Michel (1994) Les réseaux sociaux. Paris: Armand Colin. In English as Introducing Social Networks, trans. Arthur Borges. London: SAGE, 1999.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix (1986 [1975]) Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature, trans. Dana Polan. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Dennett, Daniel C. (1987) *The Intentional Stance*. Cambridge, MA: Bradford Books/MIT Press.
- Derrida, Jacques (1976 [1967]) Of Grammatology, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

- Deschamps, Jean-Claude (1977) L'attribution et la catégorisation sociale. Berne: Peter Lang.
- Desrosières, Alain (1993) La politique des grands nombres. Paris: La Découverte. Detienne, Marcel and Vernant, Jean-Pierre (1974) Les ruses de l'intelligence: la mètis des Grecs. Paris: Flammarion.
- Dewerpe, Alain (1994) Espion: une anthropologie historique du secret d'État contemporain. Paris: Gallimard.
- Dewerpe, Alain (2006) Charonne 8 février: anthropologie d'un massacre d'État. Paris: Gallimard/Folio Histoire.
- Dewey, John (1966 [1938]) Logic: The Theory of Inquiry. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Didier, Emmanuel (1996) 'De l'"exclusion" à l'exclusion'. Politix 34: 5-17.
- Didier, Emmanuel (2009) En quoi consiste l'Amérique? Les statistiques, le New Deal et la démocratie. Paris: La Découverte.
- Didier, Emmanuel (2011) 'L'État néolibéral ment-il? "Chanstique" et statistiques de police'. *Terrain* 57 (September): 3–14.
- Donald, Miles (1990) 'John Buchan: the reader's trap', in Clive Bloom (ed.), *Spy Thrillers: From Buchan to Le Carré*. London: Macmillan, pp. 59–72.
- Doyle, Arthur Conan, Sir (1926) History of Spiritualism. 2 vols. New York: George H. Doran.
- Doyle, Arthur Conan, Sir (1930) The Complete Sherlock Holmes. New York: Doubleday.
- Doyle, Arthur Conan, Sir (1977) 'The Terror of Blue John Gap', in *Tales of Terror and Mystery*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, pp. 69–86.
- Doyle, Arthur Conan, Sir (1993) *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, ed. and intro. Richard Lancelyn Green. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dubois, Jacques (1992) Le roman policier ou la modernité. Paris: Armand Colin. Dubois, Jacques (2000) Les romanciers du réel: de Balzac à Simenon. Paris: Seuil.
- Dulong, Renaud (1998) Le témoin oculaire: les conditions sociales de l'attestation personnelle. Paris: École des hautes études en sciences sociales.
- Dunn, John (1988) 'Trust and political agency', in Diego Gambetta (ed.), *Trust: Making and Breaking Cooperative Relations*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, pp. 73–93.
- Durkheim, Émile (1984 [1893]) *The Division of Labor in Society*, trans. W. D. Halls. New York: Free Press.
- Durkheim, Émile (2006 [1897]) On Suicide, trans. Robin Buss, ed. Alexander Riley. New York: Penguin Books.
- Dury, Richard (2003) 'Le caractère camp des Nouvelles Mille et une nuits', in Gilles Menegaldo and Jean-Pierre Naugrette (eds), R. L. Stevenson & A. Conan Doyle: Aventures de la fiction. Proceedings of the Colloque de Cerisy. Rennes: Terre de Brume, pp. 119–39.
- Eco, Umberto and Sebeok, Thomas (1983) *The Sign of Three: Dupin, Holmes, Peirce.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Eisenzweig, Uri (2001) Fictions de l'anarchisme. Paris: Christian Bourgois.
- Elster, Jon (1985) Making Sense of Marx. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Esquerre, Arnaud (2009) La manipulation mentale: sociologie des sectes en France. Paris: Fayard.
- Faivre, Antoine (2003) 'Sir Arthur Conan Doyle et les esprits photographiés', in

- Gilles Menegaldo and Jean-Pierre Naugrette eds, R. L. Stevenson & A. Conan Doyle: Aventures de la fiction. Proceedings of the Colloque de Cerisy. Rennes: Terre de Brume, pp. 305–33.
- Favret-Saada, Jeanne (1980) Deadly Words: Witchcraft in the Bocage, trans. Catherine Cullen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Féval, Paul (2006 [1844]) Les mystères de Londres. Paris: Phébus.
- Flandrin, Jean-Louis (1979 [1976]) Families in Former Times: Kinship, Household, and Sexuality, trans. Richard Southern. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Foucault, Michel (2007) Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–78, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, Michel (2008) *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France*, 1978–79, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- François, Ludovic and Lévy, Julien (2003) L'intelligence économique, outil de marketing: un enjeu organisationnel. Paris: ESKA.
- Freud, Sigmund (1958 [1911]) 'Psychoanalytic notes on an autobiographical account of a case of paranoia (dementia paranoides)', in James Strachey (ed.), The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. 12, pp. 1–82.
- Gaboriau, Émile (2004 [1866]) *L'affaire Lerouge*, pref. François Rivière. Paris: Éditions du Masque.
- Gauchet, Marcel (1994) 'L'État au miroir de la raison d'État', in Yves Charles Zarka (ed.), Raison et déraison d'État: théoriciens et théories de la raison d'État aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Gearon, John (1946) The Velvet Well. New York: Duell, Sloane and Pearce.
- Genette, Gérard (1979 [1969]) 'Vraisemblance et motivation', in *Figures*. Paris: Seuil, pp. 71–100.
- Giddens, Anthony (1984) The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration. Cambridge: Polity.
- Ginzburg, Carlo (1983) 'Morelli, Freud, and Sherlock Holmes: Clues and Scientific Method', in Umberto Eco and Thomas Sebeok (eds), *The Sign of Three: Dupin, Holmes, Peirce.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 81–118.
- Ginzburg, Carlo (1985 [1966]) The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, trans. Anne C. Tedeschi and John Tedeschi. New York: Penguin.
- Ginzburg, Carlo (1989 [1979]) 'Clues: roots of an evidential paradigm', in *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method*, trans. Anne C. Tedeschi and John Tedeschi. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 96–125.
- Ginzburg, Carlo (2007 [1991]) Le juge et l'historien: considérations en marge du procès Sofri. Lagrasse: Verdier.
- Ginzburg, Carlo (2012) *Threads and Traces: True, False, Fictive*, trans. Anne C. Tedeschi and John Tedeschi. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Girard, René (1986 [1982]) Scapegoat, trans. Yvonne Freccero. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Goffman, Erving (1959) The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Goffman, Erving (1967) Interaction Ritual: Essays in Face-to-Face Behavior. Chicago: Aldine.

Goldberg, Robert Alan (2001) Enemies Within: The Culture of Conspiracy in Modern America. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Goody, Esther (ed.) (1978) Questions and Politeness. Cambridge University Press.

Grawitz, Madeleine (1966) 'De l'utilisation en droit de notions sociologiques'. L'année sociologique, 3rd series: 92–102.

Greene, Graham (1939) The Confidential Agent: An Entertainment. New York: Viking Press.

Greene, Graham (1943) The Ministry of Fear. New York: Viking Press.

Greene, Graham (1978) The Human Factor, New York: Simon and Schuster.

Greimas, Algirdas Julien (1983 [1966]) Structural Semantics: An Attempt at a Method, trans. Daniele McDowell, Ronald Schleifer and Alan Velie. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Grignon, Hélène (2002) 'Sous le signe des tropiques', in Denis Mellier (ed.), Sherlock Holmes et le signe de la fiction. Lyon: ENS Éditions, pp. 25–43.

Gurr, Robert (1974) Why Men Rebel. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Habermas, Jürgen (1984 [1981]) The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Hacking, Ian (1999) The Social Construction of What? Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Hadot, Pierre (2004) Le voile d'Isis. Paris: Gallimard.

Hardt, Michael and Negri, Antonio (2000) *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Hardt, Michael and Negri, Antonio (2004) Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire. New York: Penguin Press.

Hardwick, Michael (1979) Prisoner of the Devil. London: Proteus.

Harrowitz, Nancy (1983) 'The body of the detective model', in Umberto Eco and Thomas A. Sebeok (eds), *The Sign of Three: Dupin, Holmes, Peirce*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 179–97.

Heider, Fritz (1958) The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations. New York: Wilev.

Heilbron, Johan (2006) Naissance de la sociologie. Marseille: Agone.

Heinich, Nathalie (2007) Pourquoi Bourdieu? Paris: Gallimard.

Heinich, Nathalie (2009) Le bêtisier du sociologue. Paris: Klincksieck.

Henry, Michel (1985) La généalogie de la psychanalyse: le commencement perdu. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Hermitte, Marie-Angèle (1998) Le sang et le droit: essai sur la transfusion sanguine. Paris: Seuil.

Hersh, Seymour (1991) The Samson Option: Israel's Nuclear Arsenal and American Foreign Policy. New York: Random House.

Himmelfarb, Gertrude (1984) The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age. New York: Alfred Knopf.

Himmelfarb, Gertrude (1991) Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians. New York: Knopf.

Hirschman, Albert (1991) Deux siècles de rhétorique réactionnaire. Paris: Fayard.

Hofstadter, Richard (1948) The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It. New York: A. Knopf.

- Hofstadter, Richard (1963) Anti-intellectualism in American Life. New York: Vintage Books.
- Hofstadter, Richard (1992 [1944]) Social Darwinism in American Thought, 1860–1915. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Hofstadter, Richard (2008a [1965]) The Paranoid Style in American Politics, new ed., pref. Sean Wilentz. New York: Vintage Books.
- Hofstadter, Richard (2008b [1965]) 'The paranoid style in American politics', in *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*. New York: Vintage Books, pp. 3–40.
- Hofstadter, Richard (2008c [1965]) 'What happened to the antitrust movement?' in *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*. New York: Vintage Books, pp. 188–237.
- Honneth, Axel (2007) La société du mépris: vers une nouvelle théorie critique. Paris: La Découverte.
- Household, Geoffrey (2002 [1939]) Rogue Male. London: Orion.
- Hughes, Jeff (2002) The Manhattan Project: Big Science and the Atom Bomb. Cambridge: Icon Books.
- Hume, David (1955 [1748]) An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding. Indianapolis: Library of Liberal Arts.
- Hussey, Christopher (1983 [1927]) The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View. London: Franck Cass & Co.
- Iacub, Marcela (2008) Par le trou de la serrure: une histoire de la pudeur publique (XIXe-XXe siècles). Paris: Fayard.
- Iacub, Marcela (2010) La liberté d'expression à l'âge de la démocratie représentative. Paris: Fayard.
- Jaffro, Laurent (2004) 'Les recours philosophiques au sens commun dans les Lumières britanniques', in Pierre Guenancie and Jean-Pierre Sylvestre (eds), *Le sens commun: theories et pratiques*. Dijon: Éditions universitaires de Dijon, pp. 19–46.
- Jameson, Fredric (1991) Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism. London: Verso.
- Jappe, Anselme (2001) Guy Debord. Paris: Denoël.
- Jappe, Anselme (2003) Les aventures de la marchandise: pour une nouvelle critique de la valeur. Paris: Denoël.
- Jobin, Paul (2006) *Maladies industrielles et renouveau syndical au Japon*. Paris: École des hautes études en sciences sociales.
- Joly, Maurice (2002 [1864]) The Dialogue in Hell between Machiavelli and Montesquieu, trans. and ed. John S. Waggoner. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Kafka, Franz (1998 [1925]) *The Trial*, trans. Breon Mitchell. New York: Schocken Books.
- Kafka, Franz (2009 [1926]) *The Castle*, trans. Anthea Bell. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kalifa, Dominique (1995) L'encre et le sang: récits de crimes et société à la Belle Époque. Paris: Fayard.
- Kalifa, Dominique (2005) Crime et culture au XIXe siècle. Paris: Perrin.
- Kalifa, Dominique (2007) Histoire des détectives privés, 1832–1942. Paris: Nouveau Monde Éditions.
- Kaplan, Fred (1987) Sacred Tears: Sentimentality in Victorian Literature. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Keck, Frédéric (2005) Claude Lévi-Strauss: une introduction. Paris: La Découverte.
- Keeley, Brian L. (1999) 'Of conspiracy theories'. *Journal of Philosophy* 96(3): 109–26.
- Kelley, Harold (1967) 'Attribution theory in social psychology', in David Levine (ed.), *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, pp. 192–241.
- Kershaw, Ian (1991) Hitler. London: Longman.
- Kestner, Joseph (2000) The Edwardian Detective, 1901–1915. Ashgate: Aldershot.
- Kharkhordin, Oleg (1999) The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Klingopulos, G. D. (1982) 'Notes on the Victorian scene', in Boris Ford (ed.), *The New Pelican Guide to English Literature*, vol. 6, *From Dickens to Hardy*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, pp. 13–51.
- Klugman, David (1994) La conspiration des justes. Nîmes: Lacour.
- Knight, Peter (2000) Conspiracy Culture: From the Kennedy Assassination to the X-Files. London: Routledge.
- Knight, Peter (2002) Conspiracy Nation: The Politics of Paranoia in Postwar America. New York: New York University Press.
- Knight, Peter (ed.) (2003) Conspiracy Theories in American History: An Encyclopedia. 2 vols. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.
- Knight, Peter (2007) The Kennedy Assassination. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
- Koselleck, Reinhart (1979 [1959]) Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Kracauer, Siegfried (1981 [1922–5]) Le roman policier, trans. Geneviève and Rainer Rochlitz. Paris: Payot.
- Kraepelin, Emil (1904 [1899]) Clinical Psychiatry: A Text-book for Students and Physicians: Abstracted and Adapted from the 6th German Edition of Kraepelin's 'Lehrbuch der psychiatrie', ed. A. Ross Defendorf. New York: Macmillan.
- Kraepelin, Emil (1970 [1899]) Leçons cliniques sur la démence précoce et la psychose maniaco-dépressive, ed. Jacques Postel. Toulouse: Privat.
- Kremer, Nathalie (n.d.) 'Vraisemblance et reconnaissance de la fiction: pour une redéfinition dans le cadre d'une poétique romanesque'. http://www.Fabula.org, document no. 128.
- Kretschmer, Ernst (1999 [1931]) Physique and Character: An Investigation of the Nature of Constitution and of the Theory of Temperament, 2nd edn, trans. W. J. H. Sprott. London: Routledge.
- Kuhn, Thomas S. (2012 [1962]) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Labov, William (1972a) Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Labov, William (1972b) Sociolinguistic Patterns. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Lacan, Jacques (1972 [1956]) 'Seminar on "The Purloined Letter"', trans. Jeffrey Mehlman. *Yale French Studies* 48: 39–72.
- Lacan, Jacques (1980 [1932]) De la psychose paranoïaque dans ses rapports avec la personnalité. Paris: Seuil.

Lacassin, Francis (1992) La véritable naissance de Maigret. Paris: Le Rocher.

Laclau, Ernesto (2005) On Populist Reason. London: Verso.

Lagrange, Pierre (2007) OVNIS: Ce qu'ILS ne veulent pas que vous sachiez. Paris: Presses du Châtelet.

Laslett, Peter (1977) Family Life and Illicit Love in Earlier Generations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Latour, Bruno (2004 [1999]) *Politics of Nature*, trans. Catherine Porter. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Laurent, Eric (2006) La face cachée du pétrole. Paris: Pocket.

Laval, Christian (2007) L'homme économique: essai sur les racines du néolibéralisme. Paris: Gallimard.

Leblanc, Maurice (2004 [1916]) L'éclat d'obus. Paris: Omnibus.

Leblanc, Maurice (2010 [1908]) Arsène Lupin contre Sherlock Holmes. Paris: Livre de Poche.

Le Carré, John (1964) The Spy Who Came in from the Cold. New York: Coward McCann.

Le Carré, John (2008) A Most Wanted Man. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Lee, Carolyn W. (2007) 'Is there a place for private conversations in public dialogue? Comparing stakeholder assessments of information communication in collaborative regional planning'. *American Journal of Sociology* 113(1): 41–96.

Leguay, Catherine, Henri Caillavet and Marie Humbert (2005) Respecter la vie, disposer de sa mort! Pour une loi Vincent Humbert. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Lemert, Edwin (1962) 'Paranoia and the dynamics of exclusion'. Sociometry 25 (March): 2–25.

Lemieux, Cyril (2000) Mauvaise presse. Paris: Métailié.

Lemieux, Cyril (2007) 'L'accusation tolérante: remarques sur les rapports entre commérage, scandale et affaire', in Luc Boltanski, Élisabeth Claverie, Nicolas Offenstadt and Stéphane van Damme (eds), *Affaires, scandales et grandes causes: de Socrate à Pinochet*. Paris: Stock, pp. 367–94.

Lemieux, Cyril (2009) Le devoir et la grâce. Paris: Economica.

Lemieux, Cyril (ed.) (2010) La subjectivité journalistique. Paris: École des hautes études en sciences sociales.

Lemoine, Michel (2003) Simenon: écrire l'homme. Paris: Gallimard.

Lentz, Thierry (2010) L'assassinat de John F. Kennedy: histoire d'un mystère d'État. Paris: Livre de Poche.

Lepenies, Wolf (1988 [1985]) Between Literature and Science: The Rise of Sociology, trans. R. J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leroux, Gaston (1974 [1917] Rouletabille chez Krupp. Paris: Livre de poche.

Lesage, Alain René (1886 [1715–1735]) *The Adventures of Gil Blas of Santillana*, trans. Henri Van Laun. 3 vols. Edinburgh: William Paterson.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude (1981) *The Naked Man*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman. New York: Harper & Row.

L'Heuillet, Hélène (2001) Basse politique, haute politique: une approche historique et philosophique de la police. Paris: Fayard.

Licoppe, Christian (1996) La formation de la pratique scientifique: le discours de l'expérimentation en France et en Angleterre. Paris: La Découverte.

Lilti, Antoine (2007) 'De la dispute à l'affaire: la querelle entre David Hume et Jean-Jacques Rousseau', in Luc Boltanski, Élisabeth Claverie, Nicolas Offenstadt and Stéphane Van Damme (eds), *Affaires*, *scandales et grandes causes*. Paris: Stock, pp. 177–97.

Linhardt, Dominique (2001) 'L'économie du soupçon: une contribution pragmatique à la sociologie de la menace'. *Genèses* 44 (Sept.): 76–98.

Linhardt, Dominique (2007) 'Épreuve terroriste et forme affaire: Allemagne, 1964–1982', in Luc Boltanski, Élisabeth Claverie, Nicolas Offenstadt and Stéphane Van Damme (eds), *Affaires, scandales et grandes causes*. Paris: Stock, pp. 307–28.

Linhardt, Dominique (2010) 'L'embarras de la sociologie avec l'État', in Laurence Kaufman and Danny Tron (eds), *Qu'est-ce qu'un collectif?* Paris: École pratique des hautes études en sciences sociales, pp. 295–330.

Lits, Marc (1999) Le roman policier: introduction à la théorie et à l'histoire d'un genre littéraire. Liège: Éditions du CEFAL.

London, Jack (1903) The People of the Abyss. New York: Macmillan.

London, Jack (1963) The Assassination Bureau, Ltd. New York: McGraw Hill.

Losurdo, Domenico (2006) Le révisionnisme en histoire: problèmes et mythes, trans. J.-M. Goux. Paris: Albin Michel.

Löwy, Michael (2004) Franz Kafka: rêveur insoumis. Paris: Stock.

Luhmann, Niklas (2006) La confiance: un mécanisme de réduction de la complexité sociale. Paris: Economica.

Lyon-Caen, Judith (2008) La lecture et la vie: les usages du roman au temps de Balzac. Paris: Tallandier.

Lyon-Caen, Judith and Ribard, Dinah (2010) L'historien et la littérature. Paris: La Découverte.

Maccoby, Eleanor, Newcomb, Theodor and Hartley, Eugene (1958) *Readings in Social Psychology*. 3rd edn. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Malet, Léo (1954–9) Les nouveaux mystères de Paris. Paris: R. Laffont.

Malle, Bertram (2004) How the Mind Explains Behavior: Folk Explanations, Meaning and Social Interaction. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Mandrou, Robert (1964) De la culture populaire aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles: la Bibliothèque bleue. Paris: Stock.

Mann, Michael (1984) 'The autonomous power of the state: its origins, mechanisms and results'. *Archives européennes de sociologie* 25: 185–213.

Mann, Michael (1988) States, War and Capitalism: Studies in Political Sociology. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Mann, Michael (1993) The Sources of Social Power, vol. 2, The Rise of Class and Nation-States, 1760–1914. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mannheim, Karl (2006 [1929]) *Idéologie et utopie*. Paris: Maison des Sciences de l'Homme.

Mannoni, Octave (2006 [1964]) 'Je sais bien mais quand même . . .'. *Incidences* 2 (October): 167–90.

Marcus, George E. (1999) Paranoia within Reason: A Casebook on Conspiracy as Explanation. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Martinko, Mark (1995) Attribution Theory: An Organisational Perspective. Delray Beach, FL: St Lucie Press.

Marx, Karl (1977 [1867]) Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, vol. 1, intro. Ernst Mandel, trans. Ben Fowkes. New York: Vintage Books.

Mauduit, Laurent (2007) Petits conseils. Paris: Stock.

Maugham, Somerset W. (1977 [1927]) Collected Short Stories. 4 vols. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Maza, Sarah (1993) Private Lives and Public Affairs: The Causes Célèbres of Prerevolutionary France. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- McEvoy, Sébastien (1995) L'invention défensive: poétique, linguistique, droit. Paris: Métailié.
- Messac, Régis (1975 [1929]) Le 'detective novel' et l'influence de la pensée scientifique. Paris: Honoré Champion. Paris: Slatkine.
- Mileham, James W. (1982) The Conspiracy Novel: Structure and Metaphor in Balzac's 'Comédie humaine'. Lexington, KY: French Forum.
- Milner, Jean-Claude (1985) 'Retour à La lettre volée', in Détections fictives. Paris: Seuil, pp. 9-44.
- Monnerot, Jules (1946) *Les faits sociaux ne sont pas des choses*. Paris: Gallimard. Morel, Jean-Pierre (1998) *Le procès de Franz Kafka*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Moreno, Jacob Levy (1947) 'La méthode sociométrique en sociologie'. Cahiers internationaux de sociologie 2 (double issue): 88–101.
- Müller, Elfriede and Ruoff, Alexander (2002) *Le polar français: crime et histoire*. Paris: La Fabrique.
- Napoli, Paolo (2003) *Naissance de la police moderne: pouvoir, normes, société.* Paris: La Découverte.
- Napoli, Paolo (2009) 'Misura di polisia: un approccio storico-concettuale in età moderna'. *Quaderni storici* 131(2): 523–47.
- Naugrette, Jean-Pierre (2005) 'Sherlock Holmes et l'arme secrète: les Nazis, Moriarty et Londres sous le blitz'. *Ligeia. Dossiers sur l'art* 61–4 (July–December): 124–34.
- Naugrette, Jean-Pierre (2006) 'Sherlock Holmes et les affaires étrangères', in Suzy Halimi (ed.), *Les institutions politiques au Royaume-Uni: hommage à Monica Charlot*. Paris: Presses de la Sorbonne nouvelle, pp. 61–73.
- Ndiaye, Pap (2001) Du nylon et des bombes. Du Pont de Nemours, le marché et l'État américain, 1900–1970. Paris: Belin.
- Negri, Antonio and Cocco, Giuseppe (2007 [2006]) Global. Luttes et biopouvoir à l'heure de la mondialisation: le cas exemplaire de l'Amérique latine. Paris: Amsterdam.
- Nérard, François-Xavier (2004) Cinq pour cent de vérité: la dénonciation dans l'URSS de Staline. Paris: Tallandier.
- Newsinger, John (1999) Orwell's Politics. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Nirenberg, David (2001) Violence et minorités au Moyen Âge. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Nisbet, Robert A. (1966) The Sociological Tradition. New York: Basic Books.
- Noiriel, Gérard (1997) 'Représentation nationale et catégories sociales: l'exemple des réfugiés politiques'. *Genèses* 26 (Apr.): 25–54.
- Noiriel, Gérard (2007) L'identification: genèse d'un travail d'État. Paris: Belin.
- O'Boyle, Lenore (1970) 'The problem of an excess of educated men in Western Europe, 1800–1850'. *The Journal of Modern History* 42(4): 471–95.
- Offerlé, Michel (1998) Sociologie des groupes d'intérêt. Paris: Montchrestien.
- Orwell, George (1952 [1938]) *Homage to Catalonia*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Orwell, George (1982 [1949]) Nineteen Eighty-Four, in Irving Howe (ed.), George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four: Text, Sources, Criticism. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, pp. 3–197.
- Oudin, Bernard (1997) Enquête sur Sherlock Holmes. Paris: Gallimard.
- Panek, LeRoy (1981) The Special Branch: The British Spy Novel, 1890–1980. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Press.
- Pareto, Vilfredo (1963 [1916]) The Mind and Society: A Treatise on General

- Sociology, ed. Arthur Livingston, trans. Andrew Bongiorno and Arthur Livingston. New York: Dover.
- Parrochia, Daniel (1993) *Philosophie des réseaux*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Paul, Robert S. (1991) Sherlock Holmes, Detective Fiction, Popular Theology and Society. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Pavel, Thomas (1988) Univers de la fiction. Paris: Seuil.
- Pavel, Thomas (2003) La pensée du roman. Paris: Gallimard.
- Pharo, Patrick and Quéré, Louis (eds) (1990) Les formes de l'action. Paris: École des hautes études en sciences sociales.
- Pièces et Main d'Oeuvre (2007) 'L'invention de la "théorie du complot"'. Accessed 5 June 2013. http://www.piecesetmaindoeuvre.com/spip.php?page =resume&id_article=104. Accessed 3 November 2013.
- Pinçon, Michel and Pinçon-Charlot, Monique (2010) Le président des riches: enquête sur l'oligarchie dans la France de Nicolas Sarkozy. Paris: La Découverte.
- Pipes, Daniel (1997) Conspiracy: How the Paranoid Style Flourishes and Where It Comes From. New York: Free Press.
- Poe, Edgar Allan (1979) *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. James A. Harrison. New York: AMS Press.
- Popper, Karl R. (1963 [1945]) The Open Society and Its Enemies. 2 vols. 1. The Spell of Plato. 2. The High Tide of Prophecy: Hegel, Marx and the Aftermath. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Popper, Karl (2002a [1948]) 'Prediction and prophecy in the social sciences'. In Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge. London: Routledge, pp. 452–66.
- Popper, Karl R. (2002b [1957]) The Poverty of Historicism. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Popper, Karl R. (2002c [1976]) The Unended Quest. London: Routledge.
- Postel, Jacques (1970) Introduction to Emil Kraepelin, *Leçons cliniques sur la démence précoce et la psychose maniaco-dépressive*. Paris: L'Harmattan, pp. 7–24.
- Postel, Jacques (1974–5) 'Histoire et formes cliniques de la paranoïa'. *Travaux du laboratoire de psychologie pathologique et de psychanalyse de l'université de Paris VII* 28(317): 684–7.
- Pouget, Émile and Pressensé, Francis de (2008 [1899]) Les lois scélérates de 1893–1894. Paris: Le Flibustier.
- Poulantzas, Nicos (1968) Pouvoir politique et classes sociales. Paris: Maspéro.
- Protocols of the Elders of Zion. http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma01/Kidd/thesis/pdf/protocols.pdf. Accessed 3 November 2013.
- Rāikkā, Juha (2009) 'On political conspiracy theories'. *Journal of Political Philosophy* 17(2): 185–201.
- Ranulf, Svend (1938) Moral Indignation and Middle Class Psychology: A Sociological Study. Copenhagen: Levin & Munskgaard.
- Raphaël, David (1975) 'The impartial spectator', in Andrew S. Skinner and Thomas Wilson (eds), *Essays on Adam Smith*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 83–99.
- Rayner, Hervé (2005) Les scandales politiques: l'opération 'Mains propres' en Italie. Paris: Michel Houdiard.
- Rayner, Hervé (2008) 'Les théories du complot dans les interprétations du terrorisme en Italie: la prégnance du point de vue cryptologique', in Gius Gargiulo

- and Otmar Seul (eds), Terrorismes: l'Italie et l'Allemagne à l'épreuve des années de plomb, 1970–1980. Paris: Michel Houdiard, pp. 162–93.
- Rennes, Juliette (2007) Le mérite et la nature; une controverse républicaine: l'accès des femmes aux professions de prestige. Paris: Fayard.
- Revel, Jacques (1998) *Jeux d'échelle: la micro-analyse à l'expérience*. Paris: Seuil, Gallimard, École des hautes études en sciences sociales.
- Revel, Jacques (2006) 'Micro-analyse et construction du social'. *Un parcours critique: douze exercices d'histoire sociale*. Paris: Galad, pp. 56–84.
- Reynolds, George W. M. (1996 [1844]) *The Mysteries of London*, ed. Trefor Thomas. Keele: Staffordshire Keele University Press.
- Rigouste, Mathieu (2009) L'ennemi intérieur: la généalogie coloniale et militaire de l'ordre sécuritaire dans la France contemporaine. Paris: La Découverte.
- Riot-Sarcay, Michèle and Gribaudi, Maurisio (2009) 1848, la révolution oubliée. Paris: La Découverte.
- Robins, Robert S. and Post, Jerrold M. (1997) *Political Paranoia: The Psychopolitics of Hatred.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Rollin, Henri (2005 [1939]) L'Apocalypse de notre temps. Paris: Allia.
- Rosch, Eleanor (1977) 'Classifications of real-world objects: origins and representation in cognition', in P. N. Johnson-Laird and P. C. Watson (eds), *Thinking: Readings in Cognitive Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 212–22.
- Roubaud, Jacques (2000 [1978]) La vieillesse d'Alexandre: essai sur quelques états du vers français récent. Paris: Ivrea.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques (1994 [1862]) *The Social Contract*, in *Discourse on Political Economy* and *The Social Contract*, trans. Christopher Betts. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 43–168.
- Roussin, Philippe (2005) Misère de la littérature, terreur de l'histoire: Céline et la littérature contemporaine. Paris: Gallimard.
- Runciman, Garry (1966) Relative Deprivation and Social Justice: A Study of Attitudes to Social Inequalities in Twentieth Century England. Cambridge: Routledge.
- Saint-Exupéry, Antoine de (1942) Flight to Arras, trans. Lewis Galantière. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock.
- Sarraute, Nathalie (1963 [1956]) The Age of Suspicion: Essays on the Novel, trans. Maria Jolas. New York: G. Braziller.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul (1976 [1960]) Critique of Dialectical Reason, vol. 1, ed. Jonathan Rée, trans. Alan Sheridan-Smith. London: NLB.
- Sassen, Saskia (2006) Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Sassen, Saskia (2007) A Sociology of Globalisation. London: W. W. Norton.
- Scheler, Max (1994 [1912/1915]) Ressentiment, trans. Lewis B. Coser and William H. Holdheim. Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press.
- Schmitt, Carl (2005 [1922]) Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty, trans. George Schwab. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Schreber, Daniel Paul (2000 [1903]) *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, ed. and trans. Ida Macalpine and Richard A. Hunter. New York: New York Review of Books.
- Sebeok, Thomas (1983) 'One, two, three spells U B E R T Y', in Umberto Eco and Thomas A. Sebeok (eds), *The Sign of Three: Dupin, Holmes, Peirce*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 1–10.

- Sédillot, René (1988) Les deux cents familles. Paris: Perrin.
- Seed, David (1990) 'The adventure of spying: Erskine Childers's *The Riddle of the Sands*', in Clive Bloom (ed.), *Spy Thrillers: From Buchan to Le Carré*. London: Macmillan, pp. 28–43.
- Segel, Binjamin W. (1996) A Lie and a Libel: The History of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. Translated by Richard S. Levy. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press
- Sérieux, Paul and Capgras, Joseph (1909) Les folies raisonnantes. Paris: Alcan.
- Sérieux, Paul and Capgras, Joseph (1982) 'Délire de revendication et délire d'interprétation', in Paul Bercherie (ed.), *Classiques de la paranoia*. Paris: Navarin, pp. 99–149.
- Serres, Michel (1978 [1975]) Esthétiques sur Carpaccio. Paris: Hermann.
- Sfez, Gérald (2000) Les doctrines de la raison d'État. Paris: Armand Colin.
- Shulsky, Abram N. (1993) Silent Warfare: Understanding the World of Intelligence. 2nd edn, rev. Gary J. Schmitt. Washington, DC: Brassey's (US).
- Silver, Allan (1990) 'Friendship in commercial society: eighteenth-century social theory and modern sociology'. *American Journal of Sociology* 95(6) (May): 1474–1504.
- Simenon, Georges (1942 [1932]) *The Saint-Fiacre Affair*, trans. Margaret Ludwig. New York: Pocket Books.
- Simenon, Georges (1960 [1951]) Maigret Takes a Room, trans. Robert Brain. London: Hamish Hamilton.
- Simenon, Georges (1961 [1960]) Maigret in Court, trans. Robert Brain. London: Hamish Hamilton.
- Simenon, Georges (1963 [1951]) Maigret's Memoirs, trans. Jean Stewart. London: Hamish Hamilton.
- Simenon, Georges (1964 [1947]) *Maigret's Dead Man*, trans. Jean Stewart. London: Hamish Hamilton.
- Simenon, Georges (1967 [1955]) Maigret and the Headless Corpse, trans. Eileen Ellenbogen. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.
- Simenon, Georges (1968 [1964]) Maigret on the Defensive, trans. Alastair Hamilton. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Simenon, Georges (1972 [1955]) Maigret Sets a Trap, trans. Daphne Woodward. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Simenon, Georges (1975 [1953]) Maigret and the Man on the Bench, trans. Eileen Ellenbogen. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Simenon, Georges (1982 [1959]) Maigret Has Doubts, trans. Lyn Moir. London: Hamish Hamilton.
- Simenon, Georges (2003 [1931]) A Man's Head, trans. Geoffrey Sainsbury. London: Penguin.
- Simmel, Georg (1990) *The Philosophy of Money*, ed. David Frisby, trans. Tom Bottomore and David Frisby from a first draft by Kaethe Mengelberg. 2nd edn, enlarged. London: Routledge.
- Skinner, Jonathan (2001) 'Taking conspiracy seriously: fantastic narratives and Mr Grey the Pan-Afrikanist on Montserrat', in Jane Parish and Martin Parker (eds), *The Age of Anxiety: Conspiracy Theory and the Human Sciences*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 93–111.
- Smith, Adam (2002 [1759]) The Theory of Moral Sentiments, ed. Knud Haakonssen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Spengler, Oswald (1926–8 [1918–23]) *The Decline of the West*, trans. Charles Francis Atkinson. 2 vols. New York: A. A. Knopf.
- Sperber, Dan, Premack, David and Premack, Ann James (1995) Causal Cognition: A Multidisciplinary Debate. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Spire, Alexis (2005) Étrangers à la carte: l'administration de l'immigration en France (1945–1975). Paris: Grasset & Fasquelle.
- Spire, Alexis (2008) Accueillir ou reconduire: enquête sur les guichets de l'immigration. Paris: Liber.
- Starobinski, Jean (1988 [1971]) Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Transparency and Obstruction, trans. Arthur Goldhammer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sternhell, Zeev (1997 [1978]) La droite révolutionnaire, 1885–1914. Paris: Gallimard.
- Stevenson, Robert Louis (2000 [1886]) The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. London: Penguin Classics.
- Suarez, Natalia (2010) 'Le savoir (sur)vivre dans un contexte de guerre civile'. Thesis, Paris: École des hautes études en sciences sociales,
- Sue, Eugène (1989 [1844]) *Les mystères de Paris*, ed. Francis Lacassin. Paris: R. Laffont.
- Summerscale, Kate (2008) Suspicions of Mr. Whicher: A Shocking Murder and the Undoing of a Great Victorian Detective. New York: Walker & Company.
- Sunstein, Cass and Vermeule, Adrian (2009) 'Symposium on conspiracy theories. Conspiracy theories: causes and cures'. *Journal of Political Philosophy* 17(2): 202–27.
- Swaan, Abram de (1988) In Care of the State: Health Care, Education and Welfare in Europe and the USA in the Modern Era. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Swedberg, Richard (1990) Economics and Sociology: Redefining Their Boundaries. Conversations with Economists and Sociologists. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Swedberg, Richard (2003) *Principles of Economic Sociology*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Symons, Julian (1994) Criminal Practices. London: Macmillan.
- Tadié, Benoît (2007) Le polar américain, la modernité et le mal. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Taguieff, Pierre-André (2005) La foire aux illuminés: ésotérisme, théorie du complot, extrémisme. Paris: Mille et une nuits.
- Taguieff, Pierre-André (2008) Julien Freund: au coeur du politique. Paris: Table Ronde.
- Tarde, Gabriel (2004 [1890]) *La criminalité comparée*. Paris: Les empêcheurs de penser en rond.
- Tarrit, Fabien (n.d.) 'Un étrange marxisme: essai de délimitation des contours du marxisme analytique'. Web. http://actuelmarx.u-paris.10.fr/m4tarrit.htm.
- Testart, Alain (2004a) Les morts d'accompagnement, La servitude volontaire I. Paris: Errance.
- Testart, Alain (2004b) L'origine de l'État, La servitude volontaire II. Paris: Errance.
- Thévenot, Laurent (2006) L'action au pluriel: sociologie des régimes d'engagement. Paris: La Découverte.
- Thomas, Yan (1995) 'Fictio Legis: l'empire de la fiction romaine et ses limites médiévales'. Droits 21 (July): 17–64.

- Thomas, Yan (1998) 'Le sujet de droit, la personne et la nature'. *Le Débat* 100 (May–August): 87–107.
- Thompson, John (2000) *Political Scandal, Power and Visibility in the Media Age.* Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Thuillier, François (2000) L'Europe du secret: mythes et réalité du renseignement politique interne. Paris: La Documentation française.
- Thuillier, Guy (1980) Bureaucratie et bureaucrates en France au XIXe siècle. Preface by Jean Tulard. Geneva: Droz.
- Thuillier, Guy and Tulard, Jean (1994) *Histoire de l'administration française*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Tilly, Charles (2006) Why? Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Todorov, Tzvetan (1973 [1970]) The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre, trans. Richard Howard. Cleveland, OH: Press of Case Western Reserve University.
- Tuzin, Donald (2006) 'Le coeur rempli d'effroi'. *Incidences* 2 (October): 47–71. Vareille, Jean-Claude (1989) *L'homme masqué, le justicier et le détective*. Lyon, Presses universitaires de Lyon.
- Vitkine, Antoine (2005) Les nouveaux imposteurs. Paris: La Martinière.
- Voltaire, François-Marie Arouet (2005 [1759]) Candide, or Optimism, trans. Burton Raffel. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Wagner, Peter (1994) A Sociology of Modernity: Liberty and Discipline. London: Routledge.
- Wagner-Pacifici, Robin (1999) 'The Judas Kiss of Giulio Andreotti: Italy in Purgatorio', in George E. Marcus (ed.), *Paranoia Within Reason: A Casebook on Conspiracy as Explanation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 299–318.
- Walzer, Michael (1974) Regicide and Revolution: Speeches at the Trial of Louis XVI. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Weber, Max (1949 [1905]) 'Critical studies in the logic of the cultural sciences', in Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch (trans. and ed.), *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*. New York: The Free Press, pp. 113–88.
- West, Harry and Sanders, Todd (eds) (2003) Transparency and Conspiracy: Ethnography of Suspicion in the New World Order. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Westin, A. F., Kurtz, H. I. and Robins, A. (1981) Whistle Blowing: Loyalty and Dissent in the Corporation. New York: McGraw Hill.
- White, Harrison, Boorman, Scott and Breiger, Ronald (1976) 'Social structure from multiple networks: 1. Blockmodels of roles and positions'. *American Journal of Sociology* 81(4): 730–80.
- Williamson, Oliver (1985) The Economic Institutions of Capitalism. New York: Free Press.
- Winch, Peter (1976 [1958]) The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Winder, Simon (2006) The Man Who Saved Britain: A Personal Journey into the Disturbing World of James Bond. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1979 [1969]) On Certainty, ed. G. H. von Wright and G. E. M. Anscombe, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Woods, Brett F. (2008) Neutral Ground: A Political History of Espionage Fiction. New York: Algora.

- Wulff, Erich (1987) 'Paranoic conspiratory delusion', in Carl Graumann and Serge Moscovici (eds), *Changing Conceptions of Conspiracy*, Berlin: Springer-Verlag, pp. 171–90.
- Xifaras, Mikhaïl (2004) *La propriété*, étude de philosophie du droit. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Yack, Bernard (1992) The Longing for Total Revolution. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Zamyatin, Yevgeny (1952 [1921]) We, trans. Gregory Zilboorg. New York: E. P. Dutton.

reality 23, 69–70 spy fiction 15–17, 20–1, 24–6, 122 Arendt, Hannah 252, 273	'The Blue Cross' see The Innocence of Father Brown Blum, Leon 297n41 Boer Wars 285n59
Argentina 106	Boltanski, Ariane 77, 200
Arneil, Barbara 194	Boltanski, Luc
Arnold, Gordon B. 198	actors 33
Aron, Raymond 235, 299n5	affairs 284n50, 297n32
Ashenden or the British Agent	on Amiel 106
(Maugham) 160-1	cadres 234
The Assassination Bureau, Ltd.	capitalism 113
(London) 140, 157, 158–60	On Critique xiii–xiv
Assouline, Pierre 289n15	habitus 245
attribution 36, 164–5, 274–5n2	hermeneutic contradiction 21
Auerbach, Erich 273	injustice 215
authenticity 141, 168	justice 247
The Authoritarian Personality	On Justification 3, 81, 238, 253,
(Adorno) 191–2	282n35
authoritarianism 25-6, 208-9	laws/institutions 232
D = -1 1 +- D = (A1-1)	methodological individualism 241
Background to Danger (Ambler) 151-4	
Badiou, Alain 232	multipositionality 251, 252 The New Spirit of Capitalism
Balzac, Honoré de 76, 169	260–7
Barbrook, Richard 301n24	noble/popular genre 277n37
Barruel, Abbé 145	normality 282n30
Barthes, Roland 302n29	reality 3
Baruch, Marc-Olivier 28	scandals 300–1n20
Basham, Lee 208	sociology/politics xiv, 266
Baudrillard, Jean 293n23	suspicion 208
Bauman, Zygmunt 68, 143	test 30–1
Bayard, Pierre 220	welfare state 300n8
Beaud, Olivier 113, 276n19	whatness of what is 3, 232,
Becker, Gary 238, 299–300n7	276n16
Benedict, Ruth 187, 188	Bond stories (Fleming) 292n2
Benjamin, Walter 284n48	Bonhomme, Julien 174
Bensoussan, David 295n11	The Book of the Kahal (Brafmann)
Bentham, Jeremy 227	147
Bergounioux, Gabriel 283n40,	Boorman, Scott 248
287n69	Bord, Lucien-Jean 278n3, 279n7,
Bertillon, Alphonse 282n33	279n10
Le bêtisier du sociologue (Heinich) 224-5	Borges, Jorge Luis vi, 268 Born, Jürgen 271
betrayal 168, 207	Boudon, Raymond 182, 235,
Bibliothèque bleue 19, 276n24	240–1
The Big Four (Christie) 132-3, 203	Bourdieu, Pierre 12
Binswanger, Ludwig 172	field 36
biopolitics 17, 92, 167–8, 211	habitus 94, 243–5
biotypology 53–4, 282n34	official/unofficial 34
Blanchot, Maurice 226	second nature 45
Bloom, Clive 37	social class 244

bourgeoisie civil servants 118 conservative/progressive 78 France/Britain 291n38 Maigret stories 85–6, 109	revolution 24, 140 ruling class 154–5, 157 uncertainty 137–8 The Castle (Kafka) 294n25 cathexis 172, 173
meritocracy 117–18 solidarity 141	Catholic Church 78, 145, 196, 199, 249
way of being 11	causality xi, xiii, 144–5, 164, 210,
Boyer, Pasca 1 221	226–30
Bozzetto, Roger 278n6	Cayla, Olivier 232
Brafmann, Jacob 147 Brayard, Florent 136	Céline, Louis Ferdinand 126, 276n15 censorship 25, 262–4
Breiger, Ronald 248 Breton, André 169 British social class 26–9, 42–3,	Cesoni, Maria Luisa 257–8 characterology 53–4, 175, 187, 188 Charlot, Monica 291n38, 291n39
291n38	Charonne massacre 302n31
Brown, Dan 35	Chartier, Roger 182
Brown, David S. 191, 193, 194	Chesterton, G. K. 1–3, 18, 157, 158
Brown, Wendy 302n32	Chiapello, Eve 260–7, 279n13
Buchan, John	Childers, Erskine 28, 123, 130
anti-Semitism 136, 142, 144,	Christian, Lynda 174
293n14	Christie, Agatha 13, 132–3, 203,
background 144–5, 174–5	276n14
hero figures 28, 123, 127, 128–9,	Churchill, Winston 213
135–6	CIA 194, 210–11
paranoia 171	citizen state 113
Richard Hannay stories 28, 123,	civil servants 47, 118
292n5	civil society 16, 111–12, 113
sociology of 136–8	civil war 209
see also The Thirty-Nine Steps	class struggle 65, 140
Bull, Malcolm 67	see also social class
Burke, Edmund 189	Claverie, Élisabeth 58–9, 68, 79
Butler, Samuel 139, 292n12 cadres 234	climate change 196 Clinical Psychiatry (Kraepelin) 175 clues 35, 40–1, 65
Callas affair 58–9, 283n44	Cocco, Giuseppe 302n32
Callon, Michel 248	Cochin, Augustin 183, 189
campness 275n10 Candide (Voltaire) 7 Canler, Louis 288n6	Cohen, Gerald 241–2 Cohn, Norman 147 Coignard, Sophie 249
Capeller, Wanda de Lemos 302n26 Capgras, Joseph 175, 176, 294n3,	Cold War 37, 121, 155–6, 196, 210–11
295n11 Capital (Marx) 260 capitalism xi	collectives 34, 35, 145, 226, 233–4, 237, 239 collectivism, methodological 242
conspiracy 195	Collins, Wilkie 26, 277n29, 288n5
democracy 66, 112	Collovald, Annie 274n1, 277n38
institutions of 113–14	Colombia 209
nation-state 22, 142, 277n27 power 23	Comédie humaine (Balzac) 76 common sense 49, 50–1, 52, 281n25,
revenge 159	298n47

communism 127, 136, 156, 181–2, 190–1, 192–3	Country Ivling iv
Comte, Auguste 237 confession 105, 272	Coupat, Julien ix
Confessions (Rousseau) 286n65	Coward, Barry 199 crime 12, 108
The Confidential Agent (Cropps) 161	
The Confidential Agent (Greene) 161 Conrad, Joseph 127, 185–7	corruption 29 elite 62–3
contract, Joseph 127, 165-7	ethics of 159
conscience, matters of 95, 98, 103,	events 13
125, 176	insecurity 286n60
conspiracy x, 202–6 accusations of 140–1	insecurity 286n60 mysteries 29–35, 116
agency 204–5, 296n26	and normality 48–9
American 296n28	organized 257–8
anxiety 230	servant class 62–3
bureaucracy 162	social class 22
capitalism 195	social order 75
Cold War 155–6	crime fiction x, 36, 83–4, 107–10,
entities 235	123–4
Hofstadter 192, 193–4	see also detective fiction
intentionality 239	criminality
paranoia 170–1, 173	motives 96
police inquiry 256–7	state 19, 38, 39, 77
The Protocols of the Elders of Zion	terrorism 123
146–50	The Trial 271
reality x, 138, 155, 165-6	criminals
reflexive modality 200	detective fiction 29–30, 270–1
secrecy 203–4	and investigators 31
solidarity 35	Maigret 94–6
spy fiction 36, 127	and policemen 70–1, 77
The Thirty-Nine Steps 129–30	reality 30, 226
unveiling of 163–9	responsibility 52
conspiracy form 13-15, 155	revolutionaries 283n41
conspiracy theories xi, 237	cross-checking 220, 221, 222
accusation 196	Cubitt, Geoffrey 199
American literature 294n1,	cultural anthropology 187, 243–4
295n18	culture 181, 187, 198–9
denouncers/spreaders 200, 216–17	Curtis, M. H. 182
elites 171	$D \cdot W : C \setminus I \setminus D$) 25
experts 202	Da Vinci Code (Brown) 35
French literature 294n1	Darnton, Robert 182
globalization 198	Daston, Lorraine 11
grammar of social bonds 223	De Gaulle, Charles 213
identifying 198–202	Dean, Jodi 198 Death on the Installment Plan
inquiry into 206–12, 256 as narratives 212–15	(Céline) 126
paranoia 195–6	Debord, Guy 100
sociology of suspicion 224–5	The Decline of the West (Spengler)
studies of 197, 198–200	188
contaminated blood affair 211	Degenne, Alain 248, 250–1
Corcuff, Philippe 289n19	Deleuze, Gilles 268
corruption 29, 117	DeLillo, Don 197
	-,

delirium x, 170, 172, 175–7, 189, 271 see also paranoia democracy 24–6, 66, 67–8, 112, 194–5 Derrida, Jacques 169 Desrosières, Alain 17 detective fiction xii–xiii, 5–9 attribution 36 authoritarianism 25–6 criminals 29–30, 270–1 democracy 24–6 France 73–4, 83–4, 274n1, 277n38 hard-boiled 29 metaphysics of 18 mystery 269 perfect crime 108 plausibility 219–20 Poe 6, 26, 41, 275n6 psychiatry 15 public/private sphere 16 ratio 40–1, 51, 53 reality 7, 10, 15, 18–19, 281n24 science and technology 10, 17 social class 12 sociology 32–5, 39 state 18–20, 26–9, 107–10 stereotyping 13 suspicion 21–2 tension 24–6 transformation 36–9 unveiling 14 see also noir fiction detectives morality/legality 52–3, 64 and policemen 31–2, 40–2, 49–50, 51–2, 61–2, 69, 70–1, 91–2, 201, 282n34 primary causes 55 social order 42–3, 70 state 71–2 determinism 12, 289–90n20 Detienne, Marcel 30 deviance 56, 68, 118 Dewerpe, Alain 205, 302n31	Distinction (Bourdieu) 12 domination 67, 146, 149, 203, 244 Donald, Miles 293n14 double-think 166 doubling Administration 80–1 identity 66–8 investigators 31 Maigret 85–7, 92–3, 95, 104 split personality 73–4 The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde 42 Doyle, Arthur Conan Boer Wars 285n59 and Gaboriau 83 medical training 281–2n28 and Poe 41, 278n2 social class 61–2 spiritualism 6, 275n7 works 'The Adventure of Black Peter' 57 'The Adventure of the Creeping Man' 282n31 'The Final Problem' 41 The Hound of the Baskervilles 6, 41, 278–9n7 The Sign of Four 281n21, 281n26, 283n42, 286n63 A Study in Scarlet 280n16, 287n1 'The Terror of Blue John Gap' 6 The Valley of Fear 283n41 see also Holmes, Sherlock; Holmes stories dreams, Freud 270 Dreyfus affair 59, 212, 214, 297n40, 297n41 Drumont, Édouard 147 Dubois, Jacques 76, 289–90n20 Dunn, John 207 Durkheim, Émile 35, 48, 88, 235, 273, 277n29 Dury, Richard 275n10 Eco, Umberto 278n1 ecological sphere 211
deviance 56, 68, 118 Dewerpe, Alain 205, 302n31	ecological sphere 211
Dewey, John 218–19 Dialogue between Machiavelli and	economics 238, 302n26 Eisenzweig, Uri 184, 295n8, 295n9
Montesquieu (Anon) 148–50 Dicey, A. V. 291n39	elite 60–1, 62–3, 155, 171, 197–8, 212
Dickens, Charles 139, 292n11	see also servant class

Ellis, Bret Easton 197	FARC, Colombia 209
Elster, Jon 241–2	fascism 145, 236, 237
enemy figures 126–8, 143–4, 145	Favret-Saada, Jeanne 30, 199
England see British social class	Féval, Paul 74–5
entities	Fictions de l'anarchisme (Eisenzweig)
collectives 226	184
conspiracies 235	fingerprinting 65
constructed 165	Fish, Robert L. 158
events 205–6, 229	Flandrin, Jean-Louis 284n53
individuals 231-2	Fleming, Ian 292n2
intention 11, 35, 162	Fleury, Lison 289n19
legal 230–4, 251	flows, logic of 22–3, 277n27
mediation 229-30	foreigner category 46, 90, 109, 110,
narrative 233–4, 251	118, 127, 137
non-persons 252	Forsé, Michel 248, 250–1
relationships 228, 251–3	Foucault, Michel 16–17, 65, 282n34,
sociological 233-4, 236, 240	302n32
envy see ressentiment	France
L'Époque 75	Administration 27–8
espionage manuals 253–4	counter-narratives 69
espionage stories see spy fiction	crime novels 26–9
Esquerre, Arnaud 170	detective fiction 73–4, 83–4,
essentialism, methodological 235–6	274n1, 277n38
euthanasia 284n51	hero 29, 84
events 2, 4	left/right wings 118, 119
actors 264–5	Old Regime 19, 58, 68–9, 286n64,
affairs 246–7	300n20
causality 227	Perben Law 302n28
constructed 165	policemen 73–4
crimes 13	scandals 300–1n20
de-singularized 216	serial novels 77
entities 205–6, 229	social class 27–8, 35, 43, 78, 291n38
explanation 226	social novels 25
historical 275n2 journalistic/sociological accounts	social order 75
262–3	sociology 245–6
law 231	spy fiction 28–9
singularities 3, 4, 229	see also Dreyfus affair
sociology xiii, 229	Frankfurt School 164
evil 47, 49–50, 161	freedom of speech 211–12, 297n37
the excluded 108, 177, 211, 255,	French Connections: Networks
301n25	of Influence (Coignard and
experts 202, 212, 230, 254	Guichard) 249
extraterrestrials 220–1	French Revolution 178, 183, 199
see also Roswell incident	Freud, Sigmund 172, 175, 191, 270,
the med from an including	294n2, 294n4
fables/narratives 221-2	Freund, Julien 235, 299n5
La face cachée du pétrole (Laurent)	7.0
260–7	Gaboriau, Émile 26, 74–5
fantasmatism 9, 23–4, 108	and Collins 288n5
fantastic tales 5, 6, 9, 10	crime novels 73
, , ,	

Gaboriau, Émile (cont.)	Heidegger, Martin 164
and Doyle 83, 287n1	Heider, Fritz 274–5n2
influences 288n6	Heilbron, Johan 227
innovation 75, 76	Heinich, Nathalie 224–5, 226–30,
Lecoq in 31, 76	245
and Poe 83	Henry, Michel 243
Gauchet, Marcel 205	hermeneutic contradiction 21
Gearon, John 154	Hermitte, Marie-Angèle 211
The Genealogy of Morals (Nietzsche)	hero
178	in Ambler 151–2
Genette, Gérard 298n45	authenticity 141
geography and sociology 228	in Buchan 28, 123, 127, 128–9,
Giddens, Anthony 230	135–6
Gil Blas de Santillane (Lesage) 7	in Chesterton 1
Ginzburg, Carlo 35, 40–1, 65,	in Doyle 71, 118
147, 149, 199, 210–11, 278n1,	elite 60
283n38	French 29, 84
Girard, René 273	in Gaboriau 31–2
Gladio/StayBehind network 296n21	in Gearon 154
Goffman, Erving 33, 209, 286n66	in Greene 154, 161
Goldberg, Robert Alan 198	Hofstadter on 193
Goldwater, Barry 190, 191, 192	picaresque 9
Golovinski, Mathieu 147	on the run 36
governess characters 63	in Simenon 83–4, 103
Grand Illusion (Renoir) 126	spy fiction 37, 122–3, 127, 130,
Graves, Philip 148	134–5, 136–7, 161
Grawitz, Madeleine 232	in Stevenson 8
Green, Richard Lancelyn 278n3,	and traitor vi, 300–1n20
287n1	typologies 26
Greene, Graham 37, 160	war novels 125–6
The Confidential Agent 161	Hersh, Seymour 296n24
The Human Factor 161–2	Himmelfarb, Gertrude 111
The Ministry of Fear 123, 154,	Hirschman, Albert 181
161, 302–3n2	historicism 235–6
The Third Man 161, 293n18	history 181, 189–90, 228, 268
Greimas, A. J. 127, 269, 298n44	Hitchcock, Alfred 28
Grévy, Jules 148–9	Hitler, Adolf 136
Gribaudio, Maurisio 25	Hobbes, Thomas 96
Grignon, Hélène 46	Hofstadter, Richard 192, 193-4,
Guattari, Félix 268–9	295n14, 295n15, 297n42
Guichard, Marie-Thérèse 249	see also The Paranoid Style in
Gurr, Robert 183	American Politics
II 1 I" 50 220	Holmes, Mycroft (in Doyle) 71
Habermas, Jürgen 58, 239	Holmes, Sherlock (in Doyle) 281n21
habitus 94, 243–5	clues 2, 41
Hacking, Ian 33	cocaine habit 57, 283n42
Haggard, Henry Rider 128, 292n4	and Moriarty 47
hard-boiled detective fiction 29	reasoning 50–1, 56, 278n1
Hardt, Michael 302n32	Holmes stories (Doyle)
Hardwick, Michael 283n45	Anglo-Saxon/French tradition
Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich 236	26–9, 35, 73, 83–4

film adaptations 41-2, 278n5	global 262-3
gender roles 46–7	and interiority 54
liberal state 117	non-conscious beings 275n3
masters/servants 62	paranoia 173, 230
Moriarty, Professor 185	sociology of suspicion 224–5
natural laws 6	interactionist sociology 33, 35,
reality 107-8	246–7
reception of 41–2, 118	internet 196
scandals 284n54	interpretations 14, 101–3
social order 44, 110	interrogations 104–5, 119
Honneth, Axel 68	interviews 255
Hopi studies 188	investigations 15, 259, 285n55,
The Hound of the Baskervilles (Doyle)	298n44
6, 41, 278–9n7	investigators 15, 30–1, 91–5
Household, Geoffrey 130	Iraq 208
Hughes, Jeff 204	Islamophobia 292n13
Hugo, Victor 76	Israel 204, 296n24
The Human Factor (Greene) 161–2	Israel–Palestine conflict 196
Humbert affair 284n51	Italy 296n21
Hume, David 210, 283n44, 297n34	I (f I 201 25
Hussein, Saddam 208	Jaffro, Laurent 281n25
11 - 111 - 75	Jameson, Fredric 199
identikit images 65	Jastrow, Joseph 66
identity 66–8, 142	Jewish people 142–4 caricatured 143, 144
identity papers 65 individualism	children's lives saved 296n27
holism 235–6, 248	conspiracy theories 146, 147–8
methodological 240–1, 242, 249	in European literature 292n13
individuals 67–8, 227–8, 231–2,	historical constructions 145
237–8	and Hitler 136
information management 301n21	in Paris 90
injustice 176, 215–16, 246, 286n65	ressentiment 179
The Innocence of Father Brown	spy fiction 22–3
(Chesterton) 1–3	see also anti-Semitism
inquiry x, 218–19	The Jewish Peril 148
audience for 256	John, Paul 297n38
circles of influence 256–7	John Birch Society 194
conspiracy theories 206–12	Joly, Maurice 148–50
journalism 253-4	journalism
sociology 254–5, 259–60	inquiry 253–4
types of 254–5, 258–9	investigation 37-8, 285n55
see also police inquiry	reputation 259
intellectuals 180–3, 190, 197–8,	secrecy 296n23
294n7	and sociology 253–4, 255–6,
intelligence analysis 301n22	260–7
intelligence services 37, 205, 210–11	Valles Energy 269 0 270 204-25
intentionality	Kafka, Franz 268-9, 270, 294n25 see also The Trial
collectives 35, 239	Kahlbaum, Karl Ludwig 175
conspiracy 239	Kardiner, Abram 245
entities 11, 35, 162 event 4	Keeley, Brian 206–8
Cyclit T	Recie, Brian 200 0

Kelley, Harold 274–5n2 Kennedy, John F. 201–2, 212, 213, 219, 220, 295–6n20 Kestner, Joseph 47 KGB 210–11 kidnapping of children 106 Klugman, David 296n27 Knight, Peter 202–6, 213, 295n18, 296n20 Koselleck, Reinhart 58 Kracauer, Siegfried 10, 40–1, 48, 51, 162, 275n11 Kraepelin, Emil 15, 175, 176, 180, 294n3, 294n4 Kremer, Nathalie 218 Kretschmer, Ernst 188 Kropotkin, Pyotr 158 Kuhn, Thomas 274(ch. 1)n1	letter-writing study 215–17 Lévi-Strauss, Claude 20, 42, 277n25 libelles 59, 283n45 liberal democracies 144, 211–12 liberal state 112–13, 115, 117 liberalism 191, 194, 282n32 La Liberté 148–9 Life of Lazarillo de Tormes (Anon) 8 linguistics 214, 246 Linhardt, Dominique 88 Locke, John 207, 297n29 logical positivism 242 logic/morality 53, 56 Lombroso, Cesare 176–7 London, Jack 139–40, 157, 158–60 Losurdo, Domenico 189 love 168 Lyon-Caen, Judith 75
Kwakiutl studies 188 La Barre, Chevalier de 58–9, 68–9, 284n49 Lacan, Jacques 177, 283n39, 294n3 Laclau, Ernesto 295n13 Lagrange, Pierre 295n19 Lamaison, Pierre 68 Lang, Fritz 154 Latour, Bruno 194, 248 Laurent, Éric 260–7 Laval, Christian 227 law 31, 76–7, 110, 230–4 see also legality Le Carré, John 37, 160, 162–3, 292n13 Le Queux, William 28 Leblanc, Maurice 28, 41, 83, 84, 121–2, 277n31 legal procedurals 74 legality economics 302n26 impartiality 291n39 morality 48, 52–3, 57, 64 police inquiry 258 reality 48 Lemert, Edwin 199 Lemieux, Cyril 220, 254, 259, 284n52	Machiavelli, Niccolò 149–50 macrosociology xiii, 34, 35, 261 Maigret, Jules (in Simenon) anthropology of 95–9 as civil servant 92, 93, 98–9 conscience 103 crime 108–10 and criminals 94–6 divided character 31–2, 85–7 doubling 85–7, 92–3, 95, 104 humanity 94–5, 96, 98–9, 103–5 interpretation 102–3 interrogation 119 neutrality 87–8, 93, 98, 119–20 priest figure 99 proletarian 100–1 sadism 103–4, 105, 106–7 sexuality 96–7, 98, 99, 100 social reality 116–17 violence 97–8 women 96–7, 105–6, 118 Maigret and the Headless Corpse (Simenon) 103 Maigret and the Man on the Bench (Simenon) 96–7 Maigret on the Defensive (Simenon) 290n27 Maigret Has Doubts (Simenon)
Lepekhin, Mikhail 147 Lepenies, Wolf 266 Leroux, Gaston 28, 83, 84, 277n31 Lesage, Alain René 7	289n19 Maigret stories (Simenon) 287n2 bourgeoisie 85–6, 109 French readers 118–19

and Holmes stories 26-9, 35,	Mémoires (Vidocq) 76
84–7	Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire du
milieu 74	jacobinisme (Barruel) 145
paternalism 81	Memoirs of My Nervous Illness
reality 109	(Schreber) 272–3
time of writing 291n41	Messac, Régis 5, 10
Maigret Takes a Room (Simenon)	microeconomics 240–1
97	microsociology xiii, 245-7, 261
Maigret's Dead Man (Simenon) 90,	Mileham, James 169
106–7	milieus 35
Malet, Léo 290n21	mosaic of 27, 86-7, 89, 94, 109
Malle, Bertram 274–5n2	naturalistic 76
The Man Who Was Thursday	social class 86–7, 93–4, 116–17
(Chesterton) 157, 158	Mill, John Stuart 237
management studies 239, 279n13	Miller, Frank 277n32
Manchette, Jean-Patrick 37, 163,	Milner, Jean-Claude 287n69
287n67	Minamata disease 297n38
Manhattan Project 204	Minc, Alain 255–6
manipulation 162, 165–6, 168, 170,	The Ministry of Fear (Greene) 154,
174, 226	161, 302–3n2
Mann, Michael 42, 65–6	Les Misérables (Hugo) 76
Mannheim, Karl 92, 191	modernity 134, 143, 144, 177–80
Mannoni, Octave 200	Le Monde 215-17, 233
Marcus, George E. 199	Monnerot, Jules 235, 299n5
market economics 238	monsters 278n6
Martinko, Mark 274–5n2	Moore, G. E. 298n47
Marx, Karl 35, 145, 236, 260,	morality
299n47	biophysical properties 54
Marx, Roland 291n38 Marxism 199, 235, 236, 237, 238,	legality 52–3, 57, 64 liberal society 115
241–2	logic 53, 56
masculinity 46–7, 115	London 159–60
masters	masters 54
Holmes 62	punishment 64
morality 54	state 78–9
rule-breaking 44–5, 63–4	violence 56–7
and servants 42–7, 278–9n7	More New Arabian Nights
superego 116	(Stevenson) 8–9
The Matrix 197	Morelli, Giovanni 149
Mauduit, Laurent 255-6	Moreno, Jacob Levy 248
Maugham, Somerset 37, 160–1,	Moriarty, Professor 47, 185, 280n20
293n17	multipositionality 251-3
Maupassant, Guy de 5	murder 75–6, 87
May 1968 events 69, 182, 196,	The Murder of Roger Ackroyd
286–7n67, 299n5	(Christie) 13
M'Bokolo, Elikia 244	<i>The Mutiny of the Elsinore</i> (London)
McCarthy, Joseph 191, 192-3	140
McEvoy, Sébastien 283n47	Les mystères de Londres (Féval)
media, mass 197–8, 298n44	74–5
see also journalism; press	Les mystères de Paris (Sue) 25, 75,
mediation 168–9, 229–30	275n8, 287n3

mysteries 2, 3–4, 9	Newsinger, John 293n20
crimes 29–35, 116	Nicholas II 147
detective fiction 269	Nietzsche, Friedrich 160, 178, 179,
reality x, 5, 19, 32	188
science 274(ch. 1)n1	nihilism 141, 157, 179–80, 184–5,
singularities 5–6, 47–8	198, 207
supernatural 281n23	Nilus, Serge 147
unveiling operation 13	Nineteen Eighty-Four (Orwell)
The Mysteries of London (Reynolds)	conspiracy/reality 165-6
74–5, 275n8	mutability of past 166
myths 20, 42, 221, 277n25	political construction 167–8
•	social class 168–9
Nada (Manchette) 287n67	surveillance 168
Napoleon III 25, 148, 149	totalitarianism 163, 166
narrative	Nirenberg, David 199
acceptability 213–14	Nixon, Richard 200
actants 216–17	noir fiction 29, 37, 116, 124, 286n67
entities 233–4, 251	Noiriel, Gérard 17, 65, 276n20
meaning 212	nominalism, methodological 235–6
modalities of 221	normality 48–50, 52, 215–17,
in postmodernity 245–6	282n30
scale 217	nuclear weapons 204
transmittal 221, 222–3	nacical weapons 201
narratology 217–18	O'Boyle, Lenore 181, 182
national identity 25, 143	Offerlé, Michel 230
nation-state	On Critique (Boltanski) xiii–xiv
capitalism 22, 142, 277n27	On Justification (Boltanski and
finance 22–3	Thévenot) 3, 81, 238, 253,
Foucault 65	282n35
law 110	The Open Society and Its Enemies
local communities 20–1	(Popper) 236
reality xi, 15–17, 24	Oppenheim, Phillips 28
sociology 17	Orwell, George 293n19, 293n21
territory 79	see also Nineteen Eighty-Four
territory 79 Naugrette, Jean-Pierre 278n5,	
287n69	Oswald, Lee Harvey 201 Oudin, Bernard 42
	Oudill, Berliard 42
Nazism 136, 145, 148, 203, 237, 238, 302n1	Palestinian child shooting 296n22
Ndiaye, Pap 204	pamphlets 59, 68–9, 171, 283n45,
	299n5
Negri, Antonio 302n32	
neo-conservatism 190, 198	see also libelles
neo-liberalism 171, 182	Panek, LeRoy 46
néo-polar detective fiction 37	paranoia x-xii, 294n3
network analysis 245, 247–8,	acceptability of claims 215–16
249–51 Name Field 274–1 277–28	anxiety 39
Neveu, Erik 274n1, 277n38	Buchan 171
New Arabian Nights (Stevenson) 8–9	conspiracy 170–1, 173
The New Spirit of Capitalism	conspiracy theories 195–6
(Boltanski and Chiapello)	as epidemic 195–8
261–7	identification of 252
the newly rich 46, 110	intentionality 230

Kraepelin 15 personalities 189 primitive conception of 174–7 ressentiment 184 social/political elements 189 spy fiction 122 The Trial 272–3 The Paranoid Style in American Politics (Hofstadter) 190–1, 192–5, 295n16 Pareto, Vilfredo 225, 235 Parrochia, Daniel 248 pathological 50, 187–9 patrimony 115–16, 250 Patterns of Culture (Benedict) 187	rule of law 61–2 state violence 40–2 Popper, Karl 234–9 conspiracy theory of society 237 curse of 240–8 individuals 237–8 social networks 249–51 works The Open Society and Its Enemies 236 The Poverty of Historicism 235–6 'Prediction and Prophecy in the Social Sciences' 236 population management 286n64 populism 190, 192, 295n13
Pavel, Thomas 7	Post, Jerold 203
Peirce, Charles Sanders 41	Postel, Jacques 294n4
The People of the Abyss (London)	post-structuralism 302n32
139–40 Perben Law 302n28	Pouget, Emile 184 Poulantzas, Nicos 243
Le Petit Journal 76	The Poverty of Historicism (Popper)
picaresque novels 5, 6–8, 9, 10	235–6
picturesque 287–8n4	Powell, Colin 208
Pinçon, Michel 250–1	power
Pinçon-Charlot, Monique 250-1	Administration 117
Pipes, Daniel 203	businessmen 153
plausibility 219-20, 298n45	capitalism 23
Poe, Edgar Allan	legitimacy 34, 58
detective fiction 6, 26, 41, 275n6	policemen 31
Doyle on 278n2	political/economic 34
fantastic genre 6	ressentiment 179
and Gaboriau 83	social class 177
'The Purloined Letter' 55, 283n39,	spy fiction 269–70
287n69	state xi, 36–7, 138–9
police inquiry 253–4, 256–7, 258,	supplement 124
259	suspects 16 wealth 23
policemen 280n19 Administration 88–91	Premack, Ann James 275n2
as big family 81	Premack, David 275n2
and criminals 70–1, 77	Le président des riches (Pinçon and
and detectives 31–2, 40–2, 49–50,	Pinçon-Charlot) 249–51
51-2, 61-2, 69, 70-1, 91-2, 201,	press 70, 111–12, 277n26
282n34	see also journalism; media, mass
French 73–4	preventive incarceration 257
laws 76-7	The Prisoner 197
morality 53	privacy 111, 112, 116
order 158	private sphere see public/private
personal qualities 82–3	spheres
political neutrality 89	proletariat 140–1, 179, 192
power 31	The Protocols of the Elders of Zion
as public servants 47, 83, 86	146–50

psychiatry x-xii, 15 psychoanalytic approach 225 psychological novels 225–6 public safety 259 public school culture 46–7 public/private spheres 58, 59 Administration 81–2 affairs 85, 284n49 blurred 252–3 detective fiction 16 friendship 300n19 pamphlets 68–9 press 111–12 scandals 60–1	representation 8, 164, 273 social 6–7, 10–11 spy fiction 121–2 state xi, 226 supernatural 5 surface/underlying 14, 123 see also social reality; testing reality reality of reality xii, 15, 18, 32–3, 38, 107–8, 270 reflexivity 200, 230, 241 relativism, methodological 247, 259–60 Renoir, Jean 126 representation 181, 194–5, 197,
transparency 116	198–9, 218, 273
punishment 45, 52, 58, 64, 73, 167	repression, state 110–11, 192–3
Puritanism, radical 182	reputation 112, 114, 115, 259
. 1: 207.20	ressentiment
question-asking 297n30	disposition towards 179
Daildea July 200	French Revolution 178
Räikkä, Juha 208 Ranulf, Svend 302n1	intellectuals 183–4 modernity 177–80
ratio 40–1, 51, 53	nihilism 179–80
rational choice theory 240–1, 242,	paranoia 184
299–300n7	power 179
Rawls, John 242	social class 55, 179
Rayner, Hervé 296n21, 301n23	Ressentiment (Scheler) 178-80
reality x, xi, xii, 3-4, 9-11	Revel, Jacques 217
affairs 59-60	reversal, figure of 150-1, 154, 273
anxiety 23, 69–70	revolution
apparent 32	anarchism 24, 118
conspiracy x, 138, 155, 165-6	capitalism 24, 140
constructed xiii-xiv, 69, 156, 164	and criminals 283n41
criminals 30, 226	intellectuals, frustrated 180–3
descriptions 11	Marx 145
detective fiction 7, 10, 15, 18–19,	nationalist/internationalist 139
281n24 forgad 14	pseudo-conservative 192 social class 111
torged 14 Holmes stories 107–8	revolutionary movements 196
interpretations 14	Reynolds, George W. M. 74–5,
Kafka 270	275n8
legality 48	Richard Hannay stories (Buchan) 28,
lived/instituted 16, 20	123, 292n5
Maigret stories 109	The Riddle of the Sands (Childers)
mysteries x, 3, 5, 19, 32	28, 130
nation-state xi, 15–17, 24	Rigouste, Mathieu 259
observed phenomena 293n22	Riot-Sarcay, Michèle 25
official 34–5	Rivière, François 288n6
as ontological problem 18	Robins, Robert 203
picaresque novels 7–8	Roemer, John 241–2
plausibility 220	Rogue Male (Household) 130

Rollin, Henri 293n15	serial novels 76, 77
Rosch, Eleanor 195	Sérieux, Paul 175, 176, 294n3,
Roswell incident 196, 200–1,	295n11
295n19	Serres, Michel 162
round-up 90	servant class 279n8, 279n9
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques 169, 189,	crime 62–3
286n65, 295n11	elite 43–4, 45–6, 54–5, 64, 283n37
Confessions 286n65	in Holmes stories 279n10
The Social Contract 286n65,	inculcation 45
300-1n20	and masters 42–7, 278–9n7
Roussin, Philippe 276n15	rules 53
Ruby, Jack 201	sexuality 96, 156
ruling class 154–5, 157, 203–4, 244	Sfez, Gérald 205
Runciman, Garry 182	The Sign of Four (Doyle) 281n21,
Russian Formalists 221	281n26, 283n42, 286n63
	Simenon, Georges
sadism 103-4, 105, 106-7	anti-Semitism 289n15
Saint-Exupéry, Antoine de 292n1	determinism 289-90n20
Sanders, Todd 198	and financiers 289n15
Sarkozy, Nicolas 249–50	to Gide 290n25
Sarraute, Nathalie 226	settings for novels 290n21,
Sartre, Jean-Paul 66	290n22
Sassen, Saskia 276n17, 277n27,	works
302n32	Maigret and the Headless Corpse
scale, relations of xiii, 217, 221	103
scandals	Maigret and the Man on the Bench
and affairs 57–61, 284n52	96–7
avoiding 61–4	Maigret on the Defensive 290n27
France 300–1n20	Maigret Has Doubts 289n19
Holmes stories 284n54	Maigret Takes a Room 97
press 277n26	Maigret's Dead Man 90, 106–7
scapegoat 273	see also Maigret, Jules; Maigret
Scheler, Max 178–80, 183, 294n5	stories
Schmitt, Carl 135, 137, 235	Sin City 29
Schreber, Daniel 272–3	singularities 3, 4, 5–6, 47–8, 123,
science and technology 10, 17	229
Sebeok, Thomas 278n1	Smith, Adam 7, 227, 299n2
secrecy 197–8, 203–4, 260, 279n14,	social class
296n23	anarchism 43–4, 185
	Bourdieu 244
The Secret Agent (Conrad) 127,	
185–7	Britain 26–9, 42–3, 291n38
secret services 156	crime 22
secret societies 170–1, 280n16	detective fiction 12, 85, 86–7
sects 170, 192	Doyle 61–2
Seed, David 123	France 27–8, 35, 78, 291n38
Segel, Binjamin W. 148	Holmes 42–3, 84–5
self-control 45–6, 280n17	Maigret stories 109
self-love 177	milieus 86–7, 93–4, 116–17
self-presentation 33, 286n66	Nineteen Eighty-Four 168-9
self-referentiality 81	policemen/detectives 282n34
September 11, 2001 attacks 196, 208	and Popper 240

social class (cont.) power 177 ressentiment 55, 179 revolution 111 rule-breaking 60–1 solidarity 141 state of law 64–8, 71 see also bourgeoisie; proletariat; ruling class; servant class; working class The Social Contract (Rousseau) 286n65, 300–1n20 social criticism 75, 183 social Darwinism 136, 177, 190 social networks 247, 249–51 social novels 11–13, 25, 266, 277n30 social order anarchist threats 85	microeconomics 240–1 nation-state 17 and politics xiv, 266 reality of reality 32–3 reflexivity 230 relativism 259–60 schemas 233–4 scientific requirements 266–7 situation 227–8 society 226–7, 247 spy fiction 32–5 sociometry 248 solidarity 35, 141 sovereignty 17, 71–2, 110, 122, 276n19 Spartacist movement 136 specularity 141, 156–60 Spengler, Oswald 188
crime 75 detectives 42–3, 70 Doyle 42 France 75 Holmes stories 44, 110 law 31 transgression 84 trust 107–8 social pathology 180, 187–9	Sperber, Dan 275n2 Spire, Alexis 100, 101 split personality 73–4 spy fiction x, xii–xiii actors 225–6 anxiety 15–17, 20–1, 24–6, 122 authoritarianism 25–6 banality 161 Bond stories 292n2
social pragmatism 159 social psychology 53, 172, 187, 227–8, 274–5n2 social reality 13–14, 17, 32, 116–17 social rights 276n20 social sciences 234–9, 235 society 276n12 Administration 74, 86–7 beginnings of 65 social reality 32	characters in 13, 269 conspiracy 36, 127 and crime fiction 121–2 duplicity 122 enemy 126–8 France 28–9 hero 37, 122–3, 127, 130, 134–5, 136–7, 161 involuntary witnesses 217 logic systems 22–3
sociology 226–7, 247 violence 109–10 sociology xi–xiv detective fiction 32–5, 39 discourse 300n12 entities 240 events xiii, 229 France 245–6 inquiry 254–5, 259–60 interactionist 33, 35, 246–7 and journalism 253–4, 255–6, 260–7 law 230–4	origins 277n.31 paranoia 122 political 124–5 power 269–70 reality 121–2 sociology 32–5 state 19–20, 133–5 transformation 36–9, 121, 154–6 unveiling 14 and war novels 125–6 The Spy Who Came in from the Cold (Le Carré) 160, 162–3 Stalinism 203, 208–9
linguistic turn 246	Starobinski, Jean 295n11

state xiii absolutionist/constitutional 65–6,	suspense 18, 26 suspicion 21–2, 50, 127, 208, 224–5,
112–13, 115 Administration 78–83, 87	245, 297n29 Swann, Julian 199
authority 111 capitalism 23, 113, 114 corruption 117	symmetrization 160–3 Symons, Julian 42
crime fiction 107–10, 124 criminality 19, 38, 39, 77	Tadié, Benoît 29 Taguieff, Pierre-André 170, 198,
detective fiction 18–19, 26–9, 107–10	297n42, 299n5 Tambaran ritual 166
detectives 71–2 Foucault 16–17	Tanzi, Eugenio 175, 176, 294n3 Tarnac affair ix
history of 276n17 investigative journalism 37–8	Tasset, Cyprien 294n7, 301n24 teachers 82
legitimacy 38 lying 164	tension 20–1, 24–6 territory, logic of 22–3, 277n27
morality 78–9 power xi, 36–7, 138	terrorism 123 testing reality 15, 18–20, 30–1,
reality xi, 226 repression 110–11, 192–3	276n23 Theory of Moral Sentiments (Smith) 7, 227
science 17 secrecy 197–8, 279n14 social rights 276n20	Thévenot, Laurent 30–1, 297n32, 300–1n20, 300n8
sovereignty 17, 110, 122 spy fiction 19–20, 133–5	On Justification 3, 81, 238, 253, 282n35
superego 115 The Thirty-Nine Steps 134–5	The Third Man (Greene) 161, 293n18
unveiled 163–9 violence 38, 40–2, 67, 77, 98, 107,	The Thirty-Nine Steps (Buchan) and Background to Danger 152-4
war/peace 123–5	conspiracy 129–30 critical dimension 141 hero 128–9
see also liberal state; nation-state statistics 11, 12, 16, 17, 65 stereotyping 13, 221, 285n58, 295n9	illusion/truth 135–6 Jews 142
Sternhell, Zeev 139 Stevenson, Robert Louis 8–9, 42, 66	and Kafka 268 Scudder 129–30, 142, 150, 170
stigma 256, 292n13 The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr	spy fiction genre 28, 121 state/society 124–5, 134–5
Hyde (Stevenson) 42, 66 structuralism 242–3, 249	themes 131–3 wanderings 129–31
A Study in Scarlet (Doyle) 280n16, 287n1	Thomas, Yan 231 Thompson, John 60–1 Thuillian Curr 201 21
Suarez, Natalia 209, 259 subalternity 44, 55, 61, 100–2 Sue, Eugene 25, 75, 275n8, 287n3	Thuillier, Guy 301n21 Tilly, Charles 275n2 The Times 148
Summerscale, Kate 285n56 superego 115, 116, 291n40	Todorov, Tzvetan 5 totalitarianism 163, 166, 190, 237,
supernatural 6, 50, 203, 281n23 superstitions 234–9	253, 295n12 traitors 21, 123, 127, 133, 134, 167,
surveillance 168, 170, 208–9	300–1n20, 302n2

transformation 36–9, 121, 154–6 transgression 60–1, 75–6, 84, 87 transparency 70, 111, 112, 116 The Trial (Kafka) xii anarchist sympathies 303n3 conspiracy 268–9 criminality 271 paranoia 272–3 state organization 269–70, 271–2 unveiling process 272–3 Troplang, Raymond-Théodore 279n8 trust 107–8, 207, 211, 297n29 truth/falsity 20–1, 214	Wagner, Peter 17 Walzer, Michael 301n20 war novels 125-6 Warren Commission 201, 213 Watergate 200 We (Zamyatin) 293n19 weapons of mass destruction 208 Weber, Max 67, 106, 112, 191, 265, 299n4 welfare state 17, 66, 240, 276n21, 289n17, 300n8 West, Harry 198 whatness of what is 3, 14, 56, 232, 276n16 whigh blowers 211
Tuzin, Donald 166 unconscious 164 unveiling process 13, 14, 163–9, 272–3 unwarranted conspiracy theories (UCTs) 206–7	whistle blowers 211 White, Harrison 248, 300n12 Wikileaks 197 Williams, Roy 278n5 Williamson, Oliver 113 Winch, Peter 299n4 Winder, Simon 292n2 Wittgenstein, Ludwig 3, 298n47
The Valley of Fear (Doyle) 283n41 van Parijs, Philippe 241–2 Vareille, Jean-Claude 56 The Velvet Well (Gearon) 154 Vernant, Jean-Pierre 30 Vidocq, Eugène-François 76, 288n6 Vigne, Eric 293n19 violence accusation 283n47 injustice 215–16 law-preserving 283–4n48 Maigret 97–8 moral order 56–7 society 109–10 state 38, 40–2, 67, 77, 98, 107, 113–14, 122 Voltaire, François-Marie Arouet 7,	women Maigret stories 118 male domination 203–4 question of 294n6 self-control 280n17 in social order 46 stereotyping 285n58 trouble-makers 63 Woods, Brett F. 151 working class 78, 100–1 worth, orders of 282n35 Wulff, Erich 172–4, 175 The X-Files 170, 197 Yack, Bernard 158
	Zamyatin, Yevgeny 293n19